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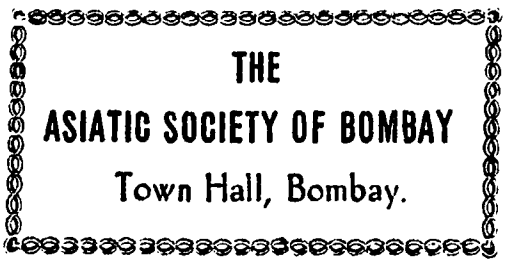

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PICTURES OF THE PAST.

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TO

THE COUNTESS OF WESTMORLAND;

LEARNED AS NOBLE, GENTLE AS WISE,

AND,

BY THE LUSTRE OF HER TALENTS

AND GRACE OF HER VIRTUES,

WORTHY

OF THE GLORIOUS RACE WHENCE SHE DESCENDS;

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED,

IN TOKEN OF THE WRITER'S

DEEP ADMIRATION AND LOVING RESPECT.

I DEDICATE MY BOOK TO

THOMAS WARING, ESQ.,

CIVIL ENGINEER, CARDIFF,

IN MEMORY OF

MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS OF UNBROKEN FRIENDSHIP.

HE PARTICIPATED

IN MANY OF THE EARLIER SCENES I DESCRIBE.

PREFACE.

SEATED upon a fallen monarch of the wilds of Northern Australia, discussing a mid-day meal of bush tea and damper, I thought that a few pictures of my past might amuse, and haply instruct, some of my immediate descendants.

Taking my 'field book,' I began at once. It was not until many a day thereafter that I first had an idea of seeing my name in print. But *che sara sara*, and my book has grown into a sort of Autobiography, extending over some twenty-six years in England, and a score more elsewhere.

The English recollections may be sometimes a little indefinite as to dates, but, I think, not so as to facts. Those of Australia hardly profess to be more than relations of sometime circumstances. All are my own, save that one sent to me by my old friend J. H——.

For the arrangement of this, my first attempt, I am

indebted to the experience of Mr. T. Wemyss Reid, a gentleman whose interest was already engaged upon one of the subjects spoken of by me in this book. I have much to thank him for.

I ought to mention, in order to make clear certain passages which might otherwise appear unintelligible, that a few months ago an entirely unlooked-for opportunity presented itself for a visit to England, of which I most gladly availed myself.

FRANCIS H. GRUNDY.

BAYSWATER, LONDON,
March 1879.

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Part I.

ENGLAND.

PICTURES OF THE PAST.

CHAPTER I.

BIRTH OF THE AUTHOR AND OF THE RAILWAY SYSTEM.

I am born and brought up—Early Memories—School and Play—Opening of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway—Death and Funeral of Huskisson—Rhyl in its Youth—A Stormy Passage—The *Rothesay Castle*—My Grandfather—A Runaway Trip to Manchester—Sir Thomas Potter.

IS it worth while for one who has done 'not wisely nor too well' with his life, to tell his tale of 'talents wasted, time misspent?' I have no moral to deduce,—a lifetime should show its own,—nor do I believe in the *Aspice finem.* Never was inference from foregone premises more false than that so constantly insisted upon by old age prosing to 'hot youth.'

'Ah! so Dick Daredevil's dead at last. I knew he would come to grief. What a fellow he was! a rollicking, jolly dog, the best company in the world; how he knocked about, went everywhere, and saw everything! But he did no good for himself, never

had a penny; and now he's dead—drowned in that collision! What did he want exploring New Guinea, or helping Garibaldi, or what not? Ah! a rolling stone, a rolling stone! My boys, take example from Hardcash Humdrum. There's a man for you! Never two days out of London in his life, and worth a quarter of a million of money.' Pooh! they look at the end only, and the wrong end besides.

Look life through, O ye self-wise drivellers! begin at the right end. See Dick—the bold, careless, good-natured Dick—the life of his schoolmates, the leader of his college, the joy of his love, who died young, and first set him roving, although he soon followed it for its own sake. Follow the bearded pioneer in Africa or Australia; see him overcome difficulties, defy dangers, and add at last one name more to the long list of envied victims to his country's greatness. False, oh, most false is your conclusion! Dick has *lived:* Hardcash has but existed. Artemus Ward hits the whole story: 'Did he have a good time when he was here?'

Verily, I fear I should act no better were my time to come over again, unless, indeed, I were to put money in my purse. A good deal might have been done during the railway mania of '45 and '46, and in cotton in '58 to '60, in that way.

I was born, doubtless, but I do not know where, for at the period of my advent, we—that is, my parents—were living in two places at once—a house in Manchester and a cottage in Cheshire, and I do not know in which of them my birth took place.

My mother, when I was about fourteen, took me to her room, and, opening a wardrobe, told me that I was now old enough to keep my certificate of—something or other. Little she knew about it. I never was able to keep anything—unless a lady's secret, perhaps. She handed me a parchment, which I took, lost, and have never heard of since, so that I may retain a doubt whether I ever was born after all. Surely I committed a rash action in making my appearance, for I was several years after the previously latest arrival, and the children were much puzzled to know whether it really was I or not. Deciding affirmatively, I became a petted plaything, developing, as time progressed, into a miracle.

My memory is vague, but from subsequent information derived from my mother and sisters, I gather that I had cut all my teeth at six months old, could sing a comic song and dance a breakdown at two years, and was perfect in all ancient and modern languages, excepting Hebrew, at four years old; Hebrew I was only learning. Perhaps four years may be considered rather youthful, but the Hebrew study at least is true. We were in possession of the friendship of a funny old French *emigré*. My father was anxious to assist him as much as he could, so he engaged this Monsieur Cielmanne to teach his three youngest children French, Italian, and Hebrew. Now his three youngest children were aged respectively ten, nine, and four. Thus was I studying Hebrew at four years old. I suppose Monsieur Cielmanne was a fair type of his class,—highly educated, prosy, though voluble, and with a weakness for *eau sucrée*. At times

he would put on a decidedly dejected appearance, and be much given to highly inflated compliments, idiotic smiles, and profound genuflexions. All these symptoms he attributed to an overdose of *eau sucrée;* but he somehow gradually recovered his normal manner under the influence of still more. Could he have mistaken *eau sucrée* for *eau de vie?* He was small, thin, and much given to anecdotes; and as he had, when young, been through the Revolution of 1790, he must have had very interesting ones to tell.

What apparently unreasonably trifling little incidents are those which first print themselves upon the mind's blank page, and what great gaps of white follow ere another impression 'takes'! For example, I remember vividly a fluffy old coach, a wicker basket with a kitten mewing in it, and I on my mother's knee. These were facts connected with our removal from Manchester to Liverpool, when I was but two years old. And when that kitten died, for I crushed it under foot accidentally, and it lay writhing all day in my bed, I refused to be comforted, and it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that this was about the greatest trial of my life. I had a letter only last week, mentioning 'that sad, bitter day when your kitten died.' And yet at two years old I lost a year-old sister, to whom I was, they say, inseparably attached, and whose loss my mother never recovered; but I have not the veriest shade of a memory of this.

Then comes a blank of two years, and when I waken, lo! I am four years old, and marching hand in hand with brother and sister to school. That brother has

been dead four years, and that sister's children are men and women to-day.

About this time I made an unsuccessful effort to drown myself. In the yard of our house was a very deep well. Something was wrong, and workmen were there. They had the boarding off the top. My brother and sister were amusing themselves by shutting their eyes and capering about the yard backwards. I must do the same. I did, and backed into the well. My brethren fled 'for safety and for succour,' I suppose. Now the repairing, as it had been my danger, became my safety. Hoarding was round the well, and great nails were in the hoarding. On one of these I hung suspended. I suppose I should have been one of the 'little children in heaven' but for those nails.

More blank pages, and I am six, and again upon the old-school road; but this time accompanied by a little Quakeress, pretty and prim, and also six years old. She has a new bonnet. I have a new and probably first knife; but at this distance of time these facts seem scarcely sufficient to warrant my opening the knife and driving the blade through the straw bonnet with such force as to inflict a severe wound in the near neighbourhood of the little lady's eye. I did so, however. Was it my innate depravity or her primness, I wonder? Memory has no blank for that day, at least. My terror, her fright, are not to be forgotten; nor our walk home again, one on either side of the grim figure of our schoolmistress, Miss Hurry by name, a self-contained, deliberative, *masculine* body, but awfully just. She only

said, 'This is beyond *my* ordering, come with me;' and then we were striding homewards.

I was very unhappy. The 'prod' had been an impulse; the sorrow was a real and permanent regret. My mother only said, 'Oh, how *could* you?' and then we were upon the steps of that great white house—her house! Even as we rang the bell, it seemed to me that I was placed for judgment before a white-capped, benevolent-looking dame, who heard my mother in silence, until I cried out my sorrow, when she took me on her lap and kissed me, whilst the little lady, no longer to be stayed, rushed in and hugged me.

Then we knelt and thanked God it was no worse. I do not often kneel now, but I never feel so good and happy as I did when, my little lady once more entrusted to me, we went home hand-in-hand, and my mamma killed the fatted calf in the shape of story-books and toffee. I never saw my little lady more; doubtless we went hand-in-hand to Miss Hurry's for many a day to come, but memory fails to paint her again.

Unfeeling, but ludicrous too, was a trick played upon me at this time. Returning from school down the long vista of Old Parliament Street, then a broad, straight stretch of road, innocent of houses, with unformed side-walks inches deep in dust,—dancing along, child-like, kicking up that dust in clouds around me, I kicked up something that glittered and felt very hard to my toes. A watch! such as my father wore. A watch of the fob period, bloated, pot-bellied, but of good gold, with such a chain attached as the modern thief might snatch at,

but could not possibly break, and thereto suspended a great bunch of seals. A handful of glitter, say £100 worth all told!

How it got there might prove a fertile source of speculation, for it was no young man's foppery of even that period, but the sort of rich belonging of 'two middle-aged gentlemen rolled into one.' I stared amazed. To me there came a disreputable-looking gentleman, painted by my present memory as the recognised ruffian of 'the period,'—velveteen jacket, corduroy breeches, fustian cap, greasy love-locks, and a knob stick. I daresay my portrait is like him. At all hazards, I will say that his conduct was not that of a finished gentleman; for, patting me on the shoulder, he expressed himself after this manner, 'Why, my boy, what a thing is this here! I've bin a-huntin' for this blessed "ticker" for two days. A friend of mine lost it on this here werry road two days ago, and he's took to his bed with grief ever since. Ain't you glad you found it, and just as I come by an all, so as Jim may have it at once? Why, the sight of it will put him on his legs again in no time.'

I expressed my pleasure, and complacently regarded the rapidly retiring scamp till distance hid him from my view. I thought how good he was to be in such a hurry to relieve the anxiety of his friend. At home, gleeful, I told my story; but I saw my mother's face change strangely, with a momentary look of blank dismay, as she said, 'But you didn't give it to him, did you?' Immediately her look changed again, as she added, 'But of course you did; and how

pleased poor Jim will be!' Only there flashed across me an idea that I had made a fool of myself.

Miss Hurry—she, good soul, was in advance of her age; she gave us, in the years of grace 1831 or 1832, 'general information.' We had lectures on chemistry with practical illustrations. See where she stands behind a square table 'groaning with mystery!' Talk about bottles! why, on that table is a representative bottle of every shape and colour of the prismatic compass.

Conspicuous is a great glass grindstone, which presently, under the skilful manipulation of Miss Hurry, sputters and cracks and gives off as many fiery sparklings as ever did the great grindstone of the French Revolution. Around this nervously attractive table does Miss Hurry wander, now tapping affectionately the fat side of some bloated deformity, now seizing a distorted starveling and criticising its contents before the light, as might a connoisseur a glass of '27 port. Anon she raises her voice and discourses shortly.

Then she proceeds to business, performing the most startling tricks of legerdemain,—making liquors white, red, green, blue, at a word, mixing cold drinks together till they 'boil over' in their heat; amalgamating solids each of 60° of temperature, when, lo! they become a mass of ice, and frostbite the adventurous finger which touches them in doubtful question. At other times, Miss Hurry would produce a revolting specimen of a staring glassy bullock's or sheep's eye upon a white cloth. By aid of a sharp razor or carving-

knife, she would perform upon the eye intricate surgical operations. Optics anatomically illustrated this was. Again, we should have an incomprehensible lecture on astronomy, aided by the exhibition of an equally incomprehensible machine, which she called an 'orrery.'

This instrument was composed of an upright brass rod, with a number of thinner rods projecting from it horizontally, each crowned with a round ivory marble. Attached to this instrument was a handle. This handle would Miss Hurry begin to turn vigorously, as though earning a precarious livelihood with a barrel-organ. A humming sound became audible. This, no doubt, was the 'music of the spheres,' and to this music the ivory marbles began to waltz,—circumgyrating, chasing one another, 'catching' and 'passing' one another, but never 'winning,'—producing confusion amongst themselves, and 'confusion worse confounded' amongst us. I saved myself from insanity by concentrating my attention upon a big fellow in the middle of the row, who maintained a wonderful equanimity and never went round at all.

But our whitest days were when our, or rather Miss Hurry's, lodgers entered the sacred precincts of the schoolroom. They were men of whom the world has since heard. There was 'Lock,' to wit, afterwards to be the celebrated civil engineer and member of Parliament; and Thomas Longridge Gooch, one of the 'Stephenson party,'—a good, painstaking man, though, perhaps, hardly with the originality or ambition which has made his brother a baronet. Lock was Miss Hurry's terror. Given—and but seldom, for he and

Gooch, both pupils of George Stephenson, were working 'double tides' before the opening of the railway between Liverpool and Manchester—a slack time, and he rejoiced to 'take the chair,' as he called it, at one of Miss Hurry's lectures, which he *would* attend 'in pursuit of knowledge.' His manner of taking the chair was to sit upon the back of it behind Miss Hurry, imitating all her movements, until she, having gone through the various stages of ignoring his presence, would hastily vacate her position, indignantly saying that he was 'incorrigible.'

He would at once take her place, and, telling us that it would be a life-long sorrow to him did we lose the benefit of Miss Hurry's eloquence by his unfortunate presence, without having some one to supply her place, would proceed to perform a series of ridiculous antics with the subject on hand, arriving frequently at disastrous and unexpected results, such as a general smash or an alarming blow-up. Miss Hurry would thereupon rush in and tell him he would kill himself and all the boys also with his folly. He would calmly meet her expostulations by the declaration that we should die in the cause of science. Then he would dismiss us with a half-holiday and his blessing. By the bye, the present head of the Stephensons was a pupil of Miss Hurry's at this time, with very remote probability of achieving position and riches so early.

I remember a whole holiday, somewhere about this time—a solemn holiday, to mourn the death of the 'First Gentleman in Europe,' who unwillingly vacated the throne in favour of William IV. I remember walking

through the streets with my father, and fancying it must be Sunday, and with a feeling of depression, as knowing some important event had happened. We entered Robinson's, the well-known booksellers, then a sort of club for clerical gossips much frequented by my father. Here was, at a certain hour, usually to be found the Rev. Mr. Aspinall, afterwards a dean of the English Church, a gentleman of pleasant manner and abundant wit, both of which descended to our well-known barrister of Melbourne. The reverend gentlemen and others assembled here on that occasion showed no special sorrow, nor was the town wrapped in such gloom as follows the death of the great and good; the 'fat Adonis' was not greatly regretted, methinks.

At last, after 'Old George,' the 'Father of Railways,' had worried himself and all assisting him almost to desperation, the day came for an event which by its consequences has convulsed the world, namely, the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. My father, good easy soul, had with his usual dilatoriness postponed providing for any conveyance wherein we might go to witness the public opening of the great work, now successfully completed after manifold and aggravating difficulties. But that 'Old George' was so very obstinate, railways would have had a later date for their origin.

When at last my father *did* set about his inquiries, he found nearly every vehicle engaged, until at last he discovered a carriage, horse, and driver, mutually broken down. The horse was a wretched, limping creature, to which the steed that attained immortal

fame by drawing Mr. Pickwick, and withdrawing from him shortly afterwards, would have been indeed a noble animal, full of power and spirit. Indeed, the whole affair would, in these days, have received the marked attention of the 'Cruelty to Animals Society' ere it had gone a dozen yards. Into this conveyance we crowded, mother and all, although she had a complimentary ticket for the first train. Probably, like many more, she was nervous, and found the taking care of us convenient excuse enough.

We were 'seven,' descending from my eldest sister of twenty-two to myself. My eldest sister, heu! *obiit* 1870. She was a bright, handsome girl, with a rich contralto voice of rare quality—so rare that professional critics and composers of her day entreated that she might finish her studies by the usual Italian course, when they prophesied a brilliant future for her. But no! We were highly respectable middle-class English people, having, indeed, some connection with our country's history. On the stage? Not for worlds! So her light went out under the bushel of prejudice, and when I saw her last, more than twenty years ago, she was singing 'Little Bo-Peep' to a chorus of shrill young voices.

At last, then, our miscellaneous contrivance was set in motion, and we progressed at a speed of about three miles an hour. Every known description of conveyance passed us — four-in-hands, donkey carts, spring vans, equestrians. We held possession of the near side of the road, religiously receiving much unmerciful chaffing; but we got there. 'There' was a vacant spot by the railway fence, about half-way between Liverpool and

Manchester. It was said that the fencing was at last lined double and treble deep with carriages the whole distance on either side between the two towns—thirty miles apart. Almost every vehicle in three or four counties was there.

Presently the entire thirty miles was feeding—thirty miles of cold collation! Time passed, and there was much banter amongst the multitude assembled, until, as the expected hour approached, anxiety banished fun, and the silence of expectation was around us. Presently, whispers of 'It's coming' agitated the crowd. But not yet. A few more minutes of life were given to the man whom that train, so impatiently looked for, was bearing, more rapidly than had ever before been carried his fellows, to a fearful death.

The programme, if I remember correctly, was this:—A train was to leave each terminus at the same hour; these were to meet and exchange courtesies at Newton, half way; then each train was to continue its journey to the town whence the other came. Returning, they were to meet again half way, when followed the banquet, and each was to arrive home in the afternoon with its freight of passengers. The trains carried many illustrious guests, among the more honoured of whom were the Duke of Wellington and the member for Liverpool, Mr. Huskisson. In the evening, so far as Liverpool was concerned, a great meeting had been arranged to be held in Williamson Square.

At last a distant smoke rises to view, shooting upwards at first, then hanging in a long white track. The leading smoke, which rose in rapid but distinct puffs,

approaches rapidly nearer with the unheard-of speed of twenty miles an hour. Soon the train bursts into distant view, bringing with it a faint hum of shouting, which grows louder and still louder as we gaze.

Short, indeed, is the remaining span of life to poor Huskisson, as, to the music of ten thousand hurrahs, the monster dashes past our unaccustomed sight, and our shrill treble mingles with the roar of voices. Our excitement reached its climax as our father waved to us from a passing carriage. Then we have our revenge! The row, riot, consternation amongst the animal portion of the spectators was indeed 'a caution.' A shout came down the line, ahead of the rushing train, 'Stand to your horses' heads!' But for this warning there would have been few sound carriages and fewer horses to take the multitudes home. But our steed—whether from 'information received' that there was 'nothing in it,' or a belief that it was better to be frightened to death than make unnecessary exertion—behaved at this trying moment with stoical hardihood. His head hung well down, and he never moved. I think he was asleep.

Now the receding train slackens speed, and stops perhaps a mile away or less! Again the distant smoke, this time from the opposite direction, announcing the approach of the other train. Look! Gliding slowly up towards the stationary train comes the Manchester detachment, and, with shrill, repeated whistle, stops also. What is it? What is the matter? Dots of distant people are seen rushing this way and that. Now collecting into a crowd, they move slowly

to the side of the line, where they stop. Already the sad story is whispered; already it travels along the thousands with electric speed. It has passed us, and is far on its way to Liverpool, yet remains in the mouths of every one. At first vague—excepting as to some terrible accident—it soon becomes one consistent tale: 'Huskisson is run over!'

Another instant, and the engine, released from its load, dashes madly past at a speed of forty-five miles per hour. It took only twenty minutes for that engine to reach Liverpool in search of surgical help, and yet the rumour of the accident was there before it. Strange, but quite true! A gloom was over the town when it arrived, requiring only this confirmation of the report to deepen into profound sorrow.

Soon the engine dashed back again, bringing skill to the help of mangled Huskisson. Stretched upon cushions at the railway side, he underwent examination. Both legs must be amputated; and an hour sooner or later, what matter? He died under the operation. Thus fell the first renowned victim to the 'Iron King.'

Many a joyful opening has come and gone since then to many a longer and better constructed railway; but never more a first one, and seldom, I trust, with so sad an accompaniment. The way of it was this: The Liverpool train arrived first, and came to a standstill. Doors were opened and passengers alighted, got out by the inner doors, and stood between the two lines of rails, on what is now called the 'six foot.' This is not allowed now.

Then came the other train, which over-ran its distance slightly, and instead of stopping short of the already stationary one, glided past it. The passengers, seeing the shrieking monster running up to them where they stood, jammed, as it were, between the line upon which the engine approached them and their own train, became alarmed, and a rush was made for their seats. One story has it that Huskisson slipped off the step and under the coming train; another, that the passing engine struck the swinging door and knocked him off; a third, that, paralysed with fear, he stood to be struck down. What matter the details? A great life was lost.

Congratulations postponed, banquet deserted, slowly and sadly the lately joyous party returned; sadly and very slowly we returned also. We had a balcony engaged for us in Williamson Square, and in the evening we were all there looking down upon a packed mass of thousands; silent mostly, or talking low and earnestly of the sad event.

Now upon a balcony not far distant appear a few gentlemen; the crowd waits. Then arises a clear, deep voice. It rings over the great square, every word distinct and every word appropriate. Briefly the orator spoke of the events of the day—of the great dawning of a noble future; of the bright promises and sad ending of this commencement of a new era. He said a few hopeless words of hope for the poor sufferer, not then dead, and ended by suggesting a quiet dispersion of the vast crowd. This was Lord Stanley, afterwards Earl of Derby.

The next and last act of this tragedy had thrilling interest for me. It was the funeral. We had been looking forward to it excitedly. It did not disappoint *me*. The new cemetery, 'The Mount,' was but lately opened. Commanding an uninterrupted view over it was our house, facing the middle of the Parliament Street frontage. The house was a very large one, and our nursery was a room the whole length of the house, with, I think, three windows facing Parliament Street and the cemetery.

When the procession came, its route was down the street past our house, the cemetery being entered by a gate at the south-east corner. I can give a child's impressions only of the scene. I do not remember the hearse or carried bier at all, so do not know how the corpse made its last journey to join the majority. I believe the Duke of Wellington was chief mourner. Walking in silence down Parliament Street, there came, four abreast, a never-ending procession. Almost every gentleman from several counties helped to swell the number assembled to do honour to the memory of the great man so sadly and singularly lost. A vast army, all in black, relieved by white shirt-fronts only, of which the never-changing uniformity impressed me more, I think, than all else. It was not monotonous, but awful. Down they filed, under my aching eyes, down the street, round the great entrance turn, and on along the winding path a mile away, whilst ever they were marching in unceasing numbers past our door, and down the long vista of the street. The remarks of my more experienced sisters and brother

recalled me to myself. They were singling out acquaintances as they passed. 'There's papa, see, with Mr. —— and the Rev. ——. He won't look up at us, I declare!' I recollect the return in straggling groups, many shaking hands, turning this way and that, some even laughing. I wondered how they *could* laugh, for I knew nothing of nervous reaction then.

Some few days after the opening of the railway, I was walking with a gentleman along the top of the deep Edge Hill cutting. It was Sunday morning, and the novelty of the railway workings had scarcely subsided at all. Crowds had gathered along the line,—as, indeed, they did for months afterwards on holidays,—content to wait an hour or more to see a passing train.

The day was very fine, and the crowd great. There was a footpath bridge across the line over the cutting, which was always a favourite standpoint with the people. To-day it was jammed with a jostling, struggling, screaming multitude, striving to cross in opposite directions, and meeting confusedly, of course. Now this gentleman, and some others of common sense, raised the cry of 'Keep to your right,'—a very sensible suggestion, which, if acted upon, would often help to avoid accident. This time, however, it produced confusion worse confounded; for the fighting crowd, seizing the idea but recognising only their own position, uplifted a multitude of voices, calling, 'Keep to your right—*and left!*' The fighting and struggling increased, the bridge got tired of it and broke down, sacrificing another life or two.

This year my first midsummer holidays were spent at Rhyl,—then a little fishing village, now a great city, centre of Lancashire and Cheshire holiday-making. Here my father had a property, and here we spent 'our merry time' of summer for many years, of which more anon. I have to do now with disaster and shipwreck.

Holidays, especially at Rhyl, speed away quickly, and we must return to Liverpool. But Boreas, 'blustering railer,' is hard at it—very. The wild waves of the Irish Channel are tumbling over each other in their hot haste to thunder down upon the long stretch of famous sand beach, which offers stubborn opposition to their further progress for many a long mile of coast-line. The wind lifts the sand in clouds, and drives the cutting grains before it, leaving the generally 'smooth beach, which the monster waves are unable to ruffle, like a great furrowed field. The gently shelving shore is frothed with foam, and out to sea 'white lambs' top each tumbling roller, scattering thousands of diamond sprays in the wan sunlight. From time to time a storm-cloud overhead drives furiously before the gale, taking fantastic and distorted shapes in its writhings ere it resigns the contest. Far out at sea, on the horizon line, roll the bare poles—for so they seem so far away and with such close-reefed canvas on them—of a great ship 'running' before the wind for shelter and for Mersey.

Still, blinded with sand, choked with salt, and saturated with rain water, we struggle on to the river where lies the steamer, for if *she* goes *we* must go in her.

Our house is let over our heads, our father has a funeral sermon to preach on the morrow, and go we must. Up yonder on the mountain the great hulking semaphore is throwing its arms and legs about maniacally, discoursing, doubtless, of dangers farther south. It is no joke for a grown man to fight his way against such a tempest as this one, but for a child it is well-nigh impossible.

Boom! Ha! the plucky little steamer announces, through her 10-pounder brass plaything, that she means going. We hurry on board this 60-ton mite, which is still in the river, the dear old Clwyd, deep but narrow. We must cross the inevitable 'bar' ere we get the 'weather.' Once outside—bah! a clean sweep as she rounds to—bang! bang! Another wave on board, and she staggers from her beam ends and starts off at racing speed before the gale. Up with the two mainsails, one for either mast! let her go free and run for it. She does. Every short chopping sea breaks into the little ship, and as the shifting gale veers a point or two this way or that, she rolls paddle-box under nearly; but she travels, too, merrily.

Soon we dash past the doomed *Rothesay Castle*, and our sailors remark that she looks in trouble; but nothing stops us, and in three hours we round the lighthouse and are running up the Mersey. We have indeed 'banged Bannagher,' having done the, in those days, wonderful speed of fifteen miles an hour. Well for me that it was so! I had been lying prone upon the deck for most of those three hours, washed by each wave, every soul who might have helped me being prostrate

with sickness, and the scant crew more than fully occupied, for, indeed, we were in much danger.

We had, as I have said, passed the *Rothesay Castle* on our way. She was one of the first of the sadly long list of great steamers sacrificed to mismanagement and recklessness. From the accounts of survivors, it would seem that the turning-point in her fate was at the time we passed her. She was labouring heavily, and the passengers were endeavouring to persuade the captain to put into Rhyl, as they were taking in great seas and hardly making any progress. Drunk and obstinate, the captain would go on. It took many hours to reach Great Orme's Head, and then she struck and foundered, drowning the captain and most of the passengers and crew. She was a pleasure steamer, with tourists chiefly for North Wales. The sad wreck of the great Australian steamer *Royal Charter* took place near the same spot thirty years later.

This was the year of the first advent of cholera, and Liverpool was panic-stricken. The disease, at the time of our return, was at its height. I was only a boy, still I think that the world lost its head then in terror of the new plague. No doubt the mortality was enormous, and no doubt, too, means and appliances were not so good or so accessible as they are to-day. Still the closed houses, pallid looks of apprehension, and the wide detour to avoid an approaching ambulance in the comparatively deserted streets, as I recall them, remind me of Defoe and his *History of the Plague*, rather than of a modern, business-like contest with pestilence.

When I was about ten years old my grandfather died.

To my recollection he was a most eccentric individual, but as he was quite eighty years of age before I did know him, eccentricity was not, perhaps, surprising. Well known in Nottingham was old John Hancock—as well known as the castle itself; the blaze from the burning of which castle, by the bye, lighted me into Nottingham on the occasion of my first visit to that city of lace.

My grandfather used to drive about in a shaky sort of thing like a cab, one pair of wheels and a hood, but with a dickey behind instead of a footboard. Into this seat a small boy like myself climbed with difficulty; but the game was worth the candle, for when once in, if the hood were up, the fortunate sitter enjoyed a fine view of a broad expanse of more or less indifferently polished leather rising high above his head and within a few inches of his nose. If the hood, on the contrary were down, the sitter was enwrapped in its gigantic folds, and it was hopeless to think of self-extrication. This hood was, like its owner, old and eccentric. It had a vile habit of shaking itself free of its side springs under the influence of a sudden jerk, and shutting up unexpectedly, to the extinction of the bewildered sitter.

The horse was an ancient animal—older, I thought, than gig or driver. It was, as becomes age, a pious and prayerful beast, 'flopping' at most inconvenient seasons, and bringing one's nose into abrupt and painful contact with the leather hood. On one of these occasions I was standing after releasement on the 'trottoir' in tears. My grandfather, himself but now

released from embarrassingly close companionship with the front apron, offered me the consolation fee of a half-penny cake, with the promise that he was to have the first bite. It was a good joke—to him, that is. He bit off and ate about nineteen-twentieths of the cake. I never forgave him. He died when I was eleven years old, and left me some money—but he ate my cake.

My grandfather paid us a visit at the age of eighty-five. He brought his valet with him—a much finer gentleman than himself. To that gentleman's honour, they travelled third class in winter. But my grandfather could not 'afford to pay more,' not possessing more than some thousands a year. After trying our child-feelings to martyrdom, he returned third class. After that he died.

He left his valet—who, by the way, had a licence, and with whom I often went out shooting, where Birkenhead houses stand to-day, and brought home partridges—£200 a year. It was worth while to travel third class, even in winter, for that. This grandfather of mine was a very thin, wrinkled little man, who would always rap me with his stick—another joke of his. He was nephew to the declarer of American independence, and their signatures were absolute fac-similes, although quite unintentionally.

At this time, and for very long afterwards,—indeed, he died full of years only the other day, as it were,—the secretary to the Liverpool and Manchester, and, as time progressed, the whole London and North-Western system of railways, was Mr. Henry Booth, a gentleman of scientific attainments and mechanical ability. It was

he who invented that vast improvement without which locomotives could not possibly have been brought to their present perfection—the tubular boiler.

A son of his, known as Will Booth, was a schoolfellow and intimate companion of mine. Of course, as 'the son of his father,' he had the run of the Liverpool station. Edge Hill Station was, although *the* station for Liverpool, only suburban; at a later period a tunnel was constructed under the town to Lime Street. At this time the trains for Manchester, on leaving Edge Hill, ran by gravitation down a short incline, through a tunnel of some quarter of a mile, to the engine-houses. Here the carriages were stopped for a moment whilst the engine was attached, and then all proceeded on their journey. The arriving trains from Manchester left their engine here, and the carriages were drawn singly through the tunnel by horses, ponies, and, if I remember aright, donkeys. Soon an endless rope and stationary engine succeeded, and, eventually, the Lime Street tunnel.

Now, our 'constant custom of an afternoon' was to go to the station at the hour when a train left for Manchester between school hours, and get Mr. Hilbries, the station-master, to put us into a carriage, that we might have a run down the tunnel, and be taken out when the engine was coupling, returning in the dark on pony-back.

One day we had laid a deep plot—nothing less than to see Manchester. We arranged to watch our opportunity until some day we should arrive at the platform when Mr. Hilbries was absent, then we would get into a carriage and hide. He, returning and not seeing us,

would not make any effort to get us out at the end of the tunnel, and we should go on to Manchester. At last the day comes; we rush into an otherwise empty carriage, and lie down under the seat. All goes well: we are off—in the tunnel—out of it—and stopping for the engine. That's Mr. Hilbries going out! Bump—the engine backing up; clink, clink—the couplings are fastened.

The engine whistles—the drawbars tighten with a thud—we are moving off. Will Booth becomes demoralized immediately. He dashes to the window and screams to Mr. Hilbries to be let out. The train goes on faster and still faster, and it is too late. My senior sinks into a seat and subsides into blubber; but I am a more hardened sinner. Presently he recovers, and after slightly remodelling the remainder of our scheme and composing a tale for home consumption to explain our absence, we indulge in various cushion fights and war dances, varying these amusements by making hideous faces and threatening gestures at the many people lining the fences.

'Newton,' 'Newton,'—the only stopping-place, where the engine is watered, but where few passengers are taken as yet. However we had one, an elderly gentleman, who damped our ardour by asking inconvenient questions, far too minutely pressed to be agreeable. But at Manchester he left us, it being, I suppose, 'none of his business.' Now (as in those days tickets were taken at starting) we are quite free. Our programme is to return by the 5.30 train, thus having some hours in Manchester and getting home to tea.

Out in the Manchester streets, the thing begins to look less cheerful than we had anticipated. The streets *as* streets are a little narrower and a good deal dirtier than the Liverpool ones, but that is all. It is March; it rains—it always does in Manchester; we have nowhere to go and nothing to do, so we spend what money we have scraped together. We whimper a little, laugh when we can, run a great deal behind hackney coaches, get wet through and covered with mud, and manage to kill time somehow, until 5 o'clock comes, to our joy, and we 'make tracks' for the station. Then comes retribution. Turning into the then small booking-office, we proceed up a flight of stairs which leads to the platform, when a voice comes from the pay-place:

'Hallo! youngsters, come down out of that; you can't go up there.'

So we come down again and explain that we are going to Liverpool by the half-past five train.

'Very good; the fare is—so much.'

But we have no money; we are so and so, and are in the daily habit of—here we explain all about it, and about the unlucky *accident* which brings us there. Horror of horrors! it is said that in the wisest wickednesses the devil still leaves something wanting. Here is something wanting indeed! We are not believed. From first to last we have forgotten that, known to every one about the station in Liverpool, no one knows us here. Oh dear! oh dear! what shall we do? Now I do think that the station-master was much to blame. We were doubtless dirty

and disreputable-looking enough after our time in Manchester, but we could hardly have come to look like scamps or thieves in three hours, even in that black place. Besides, we gave known names, and the consequences of his refusal might have been serious. Nevertheless he turned us out. Then we quarrel, of course, each casting blame upon his 'mate.' We indulge in a few rounds of a pugilistic nature, but are all too sad for that enjoyment; we turn and roar along the street as the '5.30' steams out of the station. Mind you, it is not altogether the situation; it is the *situations*. All is over, all will be found out, and the consequences loom unpleasantly in the future when the next act begins. The distance to Liverpool is but thirty miles, and we can *walk* it before morning. So we howl along the streets; and it is astonishing how long two lads, respectable and dirty, can continue to howl unnoticed. Next we lose our way, but find some presence of mind and subdue our roars into heavy sobs, as we discuss the propriety of inquiring the way to the Liverpool road.

It was at this moment that we met a young man of some twenty-five years, who had some observation and did inquire our sorrow. We told him all, ignoring now in our subdued grief even the fiction of the accidental start, and telling him who we are, what we are, and why we are where we are. Never a word he speaks until we have finished, then, after trying hard to look grave, he bursts into uncontrollable laughter. Indeed, our dejected look and dirt and tear-stained faces must have been sufficiently ludicrous.

'Why, you young rascal,' said he, 'I am your cousin Tom Potter'—this to Booth.

To me—'And you, sir, your brother is my intimate friend and only left me the other day. But come along to the station.'

Soon we learn there that there is no train until the mail at eleven at night. In those days telegraphs were not, and our people must either have traced us already, or must remain in ignorance and anxiety till our return.

So Mr. Potter calls a cab and takes us to a big house, where we meet two benevolent ladies, who do not stop to ask questions from us, but take us up-stairs, pour some hot strong liquid down our throats,—perhaps elderberry wine, perhaps brandy and water,—and pack us off to a warm room with a blazing fire, where they leave us to the mercy of a butler in an apoplectic state of suppressed laughter. He condescends to supervise our disrobement, presenting each of us with a linen garment, which proceeding amused him more than ever.

I am much 'exercised' with my garment, I know; the quantity of tapes is amazing, the lace ornamentation is awful, and its length is embarrassing. But the big bed is very inviting. I just remember, as in a dream, seeing the butler marching off with all my clothes, but that did not seem to be any business of mine. He took the light; and the fire flickering, I am just making up my mind that it is some transformation scene in a pantomime, when — 'Come, young gentlemen, get up, it's nine o'clock.'

The mysterious butler again! He seizes us, wraps each of us up in the complicated folds of a blanket, carries us

down-stairs, where in another cosy room is a comfortable tea laid out, presided over by the two ladies, who talk pleasantly and urge good things upon us, asking questions of our homes, but nothing as yet of our escapade. Reconducted to our room, we find our clothes clean and dry. Donning these, ten o'clock strikes, and down we go again. This time we do receive a short lecture upon our conduct,—well meant and well deserved, I am sure,—and then Mr. Tom reappears, and after a hearty good-bye from the ladies, accompanied by substantial pocket comforts, he takes us off to the train, chaffing us all the way, gives us in charge to the guard as two young rascals, and leaves us.

This gentleman, afterwards well known in the political world in connection with the Anti-Corn Law League, was, as I have said, Mr., afterwards Sir Thomas Potter, Mayor of Manchester and Member of Parliament. Ours was no sad return, for we slept all the way. At the Liverpool station the various members of our two households were collected, and my welcome was about as stinging a slap on the side of the head from my father as it was ever my fate to receive. It was the only time when he ever struck me with any violence, and I verily believe it was done through nervous agitation at my return, for they could not *know* where we were or whether returning at all. At any rate, it so astonished my mother that I do believe it saved me many a long lecturing. So ended the adventure. Will Booth went to South America, and returned to die at thirty years of age.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL DAYS.

Rammohun Roy—Miss Martineau—The Rev. James Martineau—'Bruno'—Snowdonia—Classic Clwyd—Sport at Rhyl—Salmon Fishing—Primitive Bathing—A Little Adventure—A Boys' School—The Boys of Liverpool—A Battle Royal—A Stern Father and a Good Magistrate.

DO any of my readers remember Rammohun Roy? He was a Brahmin of high caste in his country, who, so far as I can recollect, had been one of the first to embrace Christianity; and whether for that reason or of his own will, he came to England. His arrival created some excitement. He was 'consigned' (brought introductions, I suppose) to my father, who received due notice of the arrival of his ship in the Mersey, but, for some reason unknown to me, he had but one day to remain in Liverpool, and that day was Sunday. What did we do but send out invitations to the world at large to meet Rammohun Roy on Sunday evening! We had a large house and large rooms. It was a large party—150 people, if I remember rightly. Why my reverend parent broke through all rule in this irreligious manner, I cannot say. But this I do know, that I 'sat up' on

the occasion. It was a great success. Rammohun Roy did not come.

At this party, however, I underwent much torture. Miss Harriet Martineau was there. Her brother, the Rev. James Martineau, was at the time my father's colleague.

Now Miss Martineau was to me a lady of very formidable aspect. My sisters were just then studying her tales upon Political Economy, and were full of admiration for their author. The tales and the lady were equally incomprehensible to my ten years; but she took a fancy to me, and whenever we met, coming out of church, in drawing-room or otherwise, would pat me on the head, and cross-examine me—not, save the mark! upon what I learned at school and whether I was a good boy, but as to any ordinary subject, such as cricket, North Wales, or fishing. She was a good lady, I suppose; but she *looked* grim, and her trumpet apparatus frightened me. And when all these questions were propounded to a nervous lad, who was required to shout his answers through a trumpet—alas!

Her brother, the Rev. James Martineau, was not handsome, but what a splendid fellow he was! Benevolently ugly, if ugly at all, with his rough-cut features, wild upstanding black hair, low broad forehead, and swarthy complexion. I loved that man; I studied with him for a year or two, and whatever of good is in me I date to that time, and for it honour him. He taught me to think; I followed his flowing periods, flowery eloquence, and close reasoning with an appreciation, veneration, and attention I never have felt for man

since; for he fascinated my expanding intellect, because he had not only a great brain, but a great *heart.* I have lived a useless lifetime since then, but at least I have never forgotten that prince among men.

A little later, I had a dog which we named 'Bruno,' after a canine hero of Miss Martineau's. Bruno could do anything but talk. Indeed, after his fashion, he could do that too. What a sad, disreputable dog he was! He would disappear on the spree for days together, returning the very picture of *blasé* blackguardness. None knew that better than himself. At such times he would make cautious advances as he neared home, scanning the streets, and dodging round corners with true 'Chevy Slyme' caution. If, 'round the corner,' he saw only the groom or myself he would march boldly on, but if he caught sight of my sisters, he would at once turn tail and scour away, to approach the premises presently by some other route; for my sisters, as he well knew, would have lectured and reprimanded him. He knew, too, that he was an abandoned dog, and nothing could induce him to come inside the house or near the parlour windows, whereon he was wont to tap for recognition at other times, until, by abundant ablutions and prolonged sleep, he had recruited himself and recovered his sleekness of coat. I have forgotten to mention that 'Bruno' was a pure, high-bred Labrador. 'Bruno,' the only one I have ever seen, was a brown-black in colour, with a few white hairs on chest, belly, and tail.

I have been a fancier of dogs all my life, but never had one to approach this in intelligence or 'tricksiness.'

Here he is teasing my life out — lying about ten yards off, his big head resting upon his outstretched fore-paws, his deep-sunk little eyes swimming with laughter, watching my every movement out of pure 'devilment.' He has suddenly refused to do anything I asked him, has scorned to carry my stick or fetch my gloves, and when, as a punishment, he is told to 'go home,' he trots quietly on ahead with his tongue out of his mouth, ignoring the whole question. And now, having reached the 'swelling downs' of the Devonshire coast line, there he lies, watching my every movement, but pretending not to be at all concerned. Up and off, upon my making any approach towards him, scouring round and round me, his tail dragging on the ground as he goes, until I am again stationary, when he subsides into the deeply sarcastic watchfulness of before, his whole frame quivering with mirth.

Then I throw stones at him and he barks aloud, dodging my best aim with certainty far greater than mine, and always when I desist, dropping down on outstretched stomach and paws, to laugh at me the more. Then I get tired and march off in dudgeon, but glancing furtively back (he was my friend, you know, after all), see him motionless in the far distance, watching my retreat quite unconcernedly, head upon paws and tail going as before. Bless you, *he* knew that I should look back, and that *then* was his time. So presently comes a heavy pat from two great paws upon my shoulders, accompanied by a playful pull at my jacket. Sometimes I recover my equilibrium with a stagger, oftener I go down. Whether or no, there is

Mr. Bruno, with stiffened, dragging tail, careering round me.

Having tired out my patience, he had now tired out my impatience. I cannot retain hostility long against his insinuating advances; he approaches nearer and nearer, yet warily looking out for squalls the while, until at last he boldly advances to my side and trudges away as good as gold. We never break the understanding which is thus arrived at. If he once gets alongside penitently, and I have said, 'All right, Bruno,' he knows it *is* all right, and marches on confidently. I think those sleigh dogs must be the most intelligent of all, although something, no doubt, is due to the persistent training which a lad of fifteen can give.

Bruno would, in his ordinary moments, return to the house at the smallest bidding, and bring me separately, with never a mistake, hat, gloves, walking-stick, one at a time, in any order I chose to suggest. He *knew* them separately, the stick especially. If it were stuck into the ground, and he were told to watch it, he would never leave it. I have had him there all night. When told to bring it, he jumped up at the handle over and over again, each time with a pull at it, until he unearthed the stick, when he would bear it off in triumph. I could put the stick down in a quiet place and bring Bruno away with me; to-morrow morning, simply saying, 'Now, Bruno, away and fetch it,' he was off, and back like lightning. Poor Bruno! Some one stole him, after many years, from my chambers in Gray's Inn. I offered £10 reward, but

we had parted for ever. Many another dog have I possessed, but only one 'Bruno.'

Probably no wilder or more romantic scenery exists among the mountain districts of Great Britain than North Wales, but I doubt whether the beauty of much of the adjacent coast-line is not its equal. Holyhead, Beaumaris, Carnarvon, Conway, Penrhyn, with their lovely harbours, ancient houses and streets, and frowning castles, overflowing with the memories of the mysterious Middle Ages, are full of interest and beauty.

Then the long, long stretches of sloping sand-beach —the rich green verdure on the one hand, the restless, sparkling ocean on the other. I am thinking of the lovely little Rhyl estuary—a line of wharfs and warehouses and a pool for shipping now, but once the romantic outlet of classic Clwyd, where its waters deliver themselves to the wild keeping of old Ocean, after their sweet journey through the ever varying beauty of Flintshire.

Six miles away, those waters wander through the old city of St. Asaph, with its fine old cathedral. Leaving St. Asaph, the river makes sleepy progress through a beautiful valley of park and meadow, studded with country-seats remarkable for trees of great size and beauty, till anon it washes the outer walls of old Rythland, a tremendous ruin, with halls, keep, dungeons, refectories, and dormitories still visible.

Old Rythland has played its part in most of the important crises of Welsh history. Built by Gryffydd, Prince of North Wales, in 1021, it has had its 850 years of vicissitude. It held out long against victorious Edward

the First of England, and held its noisy joy meetings in commemoration of that great monarch's little swindle concerning the first 'Prince of Wales.' But although a mere ruin, its great and massive walls will long stand the buffetings of time, encased in their interlaced and knotted covering of ivy.

Hard by the castle was formerly an abbey, of great beauty, it is said, which was demolished for the construction of a farmhouse and out-buildings; and all over these, in steps and walls, may be seen large stones elaborately carved, and bearing Latin inscriptions much obliterated. The castle stands, of course, upon a hill, and commands a splendid view of the Vale of Clwyd, with the river winding away in the distance, until, a silver thread, it reaches Rhyl, and disappears in the broad expanse of deep blue which cuts the horizon.

Rhyl, now a great noisy seaport and fashionable watering-place, was, when I first knew it, scarcely a fishing village. My father was among the very first of its civilised modern inhabitants. There were only two cottages on the beach line then. He bought one of these and built another, the third belonging to a certain Captain Pugh. There was also a village of fishermen's huts, and what the Welshmen call a 'hot-ell.' But soon others discovered the beauty of the place. More people came; more villas were built; communication was established with Liverpool by a small bi-weekly steamer, and Rhyl rose rapidly into fame. There was a lonely old house, with a story to it, I think, all by itself on a drear portion of the coast, two miles or so nearer Liverpool, which in

those early days we often made the boundary of our walks. Those walks—boisterous, romping, health-giving walks!

There was on a distant hill a clumsy old ancestor of the telegraph of to-day. This was a tower of observation, and commanded two upright posts—upright they might be, very awkward they were. The tower of observation was itself commanded by a restless individual who usually controlled two glasses—one a telescope, the other a tumbler of large dimensions, which was generally supplied with a dark liquid. This was rum, and that tumbler sometimes turned the tables and controlled the individual.

The individual is a battered seafaring man, whose sole remaining business in life is to stare inanely at nothing through his telescope, then dash out to his awkward outposts and tug at a complication of ropes, whereupon the posts produce hidden arms and legs, throwing them into hard, angular poses, like ill-made automatons. The battered one rushes back to his coign of vantage, and staring now in the opposite direction, again returns to his post, and tugs away at his ropes, producing once more a dance of awkward legs and arms. On making sufficient advance towards intimacy with the restless individual to be permitted to supply the wherewithal to fill one glass, and to look through the other, I discovered distant posts indulging similar vagaries. These were semaphores, which clumsily repeated messages with some speed and tolerable accuracy between Holyhead and Liverpool.

Rhyl was given up mostly to the tribes of Cambria;

their names either 'Thomas,' 'Williams,' 'Morgan,' or 'Jones.' They had 'no English'—'Dim Sassenach.' They gained their living by 'fishing for it,' supplying the Liverpool market with shrimps and salmon as the staple, but with various other fish too; for at low tide there was quite a mile of gently sloping sand-beach, over which the fishermen were enabled to lay down miles upon miles of stakes, bearing hooked and baited lines innumerable. These they visited at each low tide, taking what fish there were, re-baiting, and so on. According to my childish perception, the fish were usually *dog-fish*, and thrown away; but, I suppose, there were others that paid better.

Curiously kind to me were those rough Welshmen and those incomprehensible oddities, who, they said, were women, in tall black hats and tight cloth skirts, as though always prepared for instant flight on fairy steed; only the skirts were rather short, I thought.

But, oh! those feasts of shrimps and salmon and marrow-fat peas, which I associate with Rhyl. Are there any marrow-fat peas now? Shrimps and salmon are not, as yet, in this southern world, although, by the bye, salmon are growing in New Zealand waters, and we have prawns from Newcastle on the Hunter.

What are your dinners *à la Russe*,—your bright crystal, 'red, white, and blue,'—your snow-white cloth and serviettes, in wretched imitation of free flowers, topping your crystal glasses heavily,—your great epergne, with its real bouquet withering in the hot atmosphere, so large that you have to dodge the thing in-

dustriously ere conversation with your dearest friend or the girl you love is possible? · Pooh! what are all your hundred luxuries,—your oysters and Chablis, your white soup and golden sherry, turbot and milk punch, bronze-wing pigeon and Chateau Margaux, your Charlotte Russe ices and pine-apples, and *petit verre* of Curaçoa or Maraschino,—what, I say, are these and a vitiated palate, compared to youth, a 20-lb. salmon caught by your own skill not two hours ago, and marrow-fat peas not an hour gathered?

And what are your '27 port and filberts, your anchovy toast and devilled grouse hot with cayenne, to that brown bread and delicious butter, pure new milk, and shrimps, warm from the copper boiler, which shell with a touch. Ye gods! but now we were up to the waist in the sparkling Irish Channel, pushing away with a will at the crosspiece handle of the net of old John Thomas the kind, who is making believe that we are doing all the work and taking all the shrimps. Then we went with him to see the net emptied. Here we are by the big copper over the roaring fire, as John empties the contents of his big basket with a jerk of his elbow into the boiling water, throws in a handful of salt, claps his hands with gleeful chuckle; and, ere I have the presence of mind to shut my mouth or close my staring eyes, there's the old man ladling the shrimps out again, the dull brown changed as by conjuror's hand to bright red; and now we are devouring them at tea, whereafter we top the day with healthy sleep, the thud of ocean wave our lullaby.

Dear Clwyd! with your still depths, where wise old

trout lounge luxuriously idle, not to be tempted from repose even by best-thrown fly of perfect angler; with your foamy shallows, where splashing water runs rapidly over rounded boulders, where the struggling salmon flounders, while watchful fisherman with ready hand sends the swift spear and bears the fish in triumph to the shore.

One glorious still night of never-to-be-forgotten romance, when the tide serves well, I meet the stalwart fishermen, and we stand with lighted torch where winding Clwyd kisses the blue sea, what time the night is young, the tide at flood. See how the silver salmon swims up-stream, flaunting his flashing armour in the fitful moonlight! Every moment, lights and shadows alter as we wait; new beauties, unexpected transformations, come. Her majesty the moon sails proudly through the mottled sky, now softening her mellow light a moment behind a veil of fleecy cloudlet, then bursting from behind her gauzy screen with brightest brilliance, and mounting up and up, backed by wide setting of deep blue studded with stars, like golden spots in lapis lazuli. A warm south wind whispers the while, driving the fleecy flying cloudlets. The nets of the fishermen lie coiled at the river-edge, so laid down that they will come away, fold after fold, without warp or hitch, as the men proceed with their work.

'Time,'—the moon is lower now, the tide has turned, and the river is 'running out.' The wind is higher, too, the clouds heavier, and beginning to 'scud.' The torches flare, and send out driving lines of sparks; the trees, so late playthings for the moon to hang her radiance on,

shudder, and the late enamelled leaves drop frequently to earth. 'Time,'—a dozen strong men 'told off' seize the rope forming the end of the folded net, and rush in a line into the river across the shallows to the farther side, the big net obediently giving out, fold after fold, until, as the men mount the bank and begin to move up-stream, the 'team' for duty on this nearer side seize upon the rope ending the lower coil, and move up-stream also. The long net bellies out to the current, kept afloat at top by rough large corks, sunk below by heavy weights. Then the fishermen move on, keeping opposite to each other—now on shore, now middle-deep in water, as the width of the river requires.

The tide runs out more strongly, the net offers more resistance, the wind becomes more boisterous, and the sky darker. But we near a broad space of sandy beach, and with a shout the men on the far side rush into the stream, which is here wide and shallow, and cross at a trot, breaking into a run, and greeting with a burst of laughter one unfortunate who, treading on a loose boulder, pitches headlong into the stream, as they dash up the bank breathless.

Meanwhile, the near-side men have waited till the crossing party run up the shore at sufficient distance above them to keep the net taut, then they turn and run inland too.

Now the poor salmon coming down with the tide have been caught in the net and are held fast; a few escape under it, a few 'round it, as the men rush across stream, and some few 'monsters' leap over it or break through, and so away; but not yet to safety, for they

have another danger to face. Down at the shallows stand men with torches and spears, waiting to impale such fish as have avoided the net. Searching cautiously around, each so far as his torch will light him, they dart the rarely erring spear at faintest flash of scale, and escape is not often. I am at present among these men; I have been at the haul before, but spearing with torches is night work, and new to me.

I see a monster coming down; I hurl my spear and strike the fish (I have been practising this week past), and down I fall flat into the water. Stronger hands are near. I hold on to the line, and after dragging slowly a moment down-stream, am lifted up and the fish taken to shore. Joy of joys, a 40-lb. salmon! No wonder he pulled me over!

Then hey for the net! We run up the bank, arriving in time to see the ends closing in. The water becomes broken — splashes are frequent — on go the men — in comes the net — a great haul, struggling, splashing, beating the water into foam, but safe! No; a shout, a warning! 'tis the Welsh for 'stop him.' A great salmon is seen struggling half through the net, and a rush is made for the place. Too late! With a dash and splash of his tail he dives into deep water before the anxious hands can reach him. Never mind; plenty are landed. We have a great take of fine fish, and salmon will be cheap in Liverpool and Manchester to-morrow evening.

What a brutal thing was the bathing of my boyhood's days (perhaps altered for the better now)! Torturing children, simply because they were children, was fun then. To be seized by a satire upon womanhood,

carried kicking and screaming into the sea, plunged overhead as rapidly and as frequently as seems good to the female demon presiding, one's screams smothered into convulsive gasps for breath by swallowings of salt water; to be carried back, limp and helpless, into a nasty, wet bathing-machine; to be rasped dry, and turned out a sadly degraded morsel of humanity, is not pleasant, and in my opinion not the way to conduce to the after acquirement of the art of good swimming or the virtue of good temper. Certainly this treatment was the misery of my life. The enjoyment of twenty-three hours was spoilt by anticipation of the treatment to be received on the twenty-fourth.

Once I am all but drowned. My brother, Tom Royle, and myself are earnestly engaged with spade and barrow in doing an unsuccessful Canute business. We are on a sandbank, and know that the advancing tide rushes into the lower ground behind the bank, and forms a wide sheet of water several feet deep, ere the advancing tide overwhelms the bank. We know, but heed not. We hear distant shouts, but do not turn. Between the ever rising water and the dam of sand the battle wages on. Something startles us—we look round —lo! a great sea shuts us off from the mainland.

A crowd upon the farther side is shouting at us. My two sisters stand at the water edge, becoming desperate. A mounted man, far away, gallops furiously towards us over the sands. My brother, with that presence of mind in danger which makes each Englishman a hero, starts off at once by himself and was soon far ahead. Tom Royle, my senior by three years, with the brave hot blood of a

Welsh gentleman, dashed off after him.. I, with the sight of these gallant actions before me, cry and follow. I see my brother, the water to his waist, cross safely.

Tom Royle jumps in with a run and disappears; he has fallen, and is out again directly. I pass him meanwhile, and am in the water. How far it looks to safety! The water rises to my neck—I sway back and forwards—but that I have held on to my spade, I must go over. Surely I am in the middle—I cannot stand much longer or any deeper. I am lost! No! I see my jacket button. The horseman dashes up to me and stoops to lift me; I wave him on, saying, 'I am safe; go to Tom.' Another step or two, and I flush happily, 'Surely they will never bathe me to-day!' They did not. The horseman brought Tom Royle over, but it was a close thing.

I am strolling on the beach with my papa to see the steamer off for Liverpool. I venture to say that those acquainted with the landing-stage accommodation of to-day will find it difficult to realize the description of the place in 1837. The steamer, a tiny thing hardly up to present river tonnage, lies in mid-stream just at the outlet of the estuary, safely over the bar, but not yet quite in the open water. She has obeyed a signal to wait for more passengers; her boat, its nose run into the shingle beach which shelves rapidly into deep water, is taking in the passengers—three ladies, a baby, and two drunken gentlemen. The sailors push off—the tide is running out rapidly—the boat drifts down towards the steamer—a few steady strokes will bring her alongside. The sailors sit down to their oars, but the two drunkards

wish to pull, and interfere. There is angry controversy, the boat drifting seaward the while. One of the drunkards says he'll settle it, and jumps into the thwart. He does settle it. He lurches to one side, and over goes the boat.

The sailors turn at once and swim to shore, followed by one of the drunkards. On the shore, all is hurry. My father throws me off and runs to where another boat is hauled up ashore. Many join him. She is run in with a will, and as she floats the sailors reach her and clamber in. Four oars and four willing pullers. The loose thwarts, foot-boards, and things out of the upset boat have formed a sort of raft on which lie shawls. Two of the ladies cling to this raft, upon which they have put the baby, out of reach of the water almost: they are drifting seaward. The third lady, seemingly buoyed up by her clothing, is leading them seaward, screaming. The first drunkard is struggling up the bank. The second is splashing the water in awkward effort to follow his companion; evidently he could do so if sober. He tries to clutch the passing boat, which sheers off and passes him, the pullers straining every nerve, for now the lady is drowning. They pass by the raft too at speed. As they near her, the terrified woman for a moment screams feebly, and goes down—for the last time, those near me on shore say. But no; as my young eyes fill and I am going to turn away, the Welsh boatman at the bow drops his oar into the water and goes over a clean header. A minute, seeming ten, and his shock head rises—he has the lady by the back hair—he throws his arm round the

floating oar and keeps her above water. Cheers from land and steamer, and she is in the boat safe.

The three upon the raft are now rescued; but where now is the man left behind? He is no longer to be seen; they think him drowned, but he is seated by his companion ashore, who has brought him out. The raft floats on, separates, and disappears, so 'all's well.' When asked what they wanted, the two men answered, 'More brandy.' They were somewhat severely complimented upon their choice.

But day follows day, and childhood comes to an end. Miss Hurry is a memory. I am at school—a select one, limited to twenty boys. It was your opening half-year, Mr. J., when I joined you. You were a good-natured, good-tempered, kind gentleman. But the boys of the period, although but twenty in number, were too many for you. I was with you some years. You tore my ear severely in a savage attempt to drag me round the room by that member; you cut my head with a heavy book. But I have long forgiven you; nay, you had all the worst of it,—you were indeed injured and long-suffering, and worms will turn. I fear me you are with them ere now, for it is forty years ago.

Boys at school! as much play, as little work, as possible; as much and as little as was compatible with the earnest conduct of those wars, the terror of suburban ladies of that period. It was in the early days of Sir Robert Peel's new police bill. Boys had not yet learnt that respect for the new race of policemen which time and their efficiency soon brought. Looking upon them as but a new edition of the old

watchmen, we defied them, and I have seen a loaded blackthorn do service in the hands of a stalwart sixteen-year-old against the royal staff.

But the end of those days soon came. I verily believe, however, that among minor nuisances requiring to be put down by the strong hand of the new police, the combats of boys always in progress were the most crying. 'Gentlemen against blackguards,' we called them; how the other side named them I don't know. Our battle-ground was a wide common called the Parliament Fields, between Hope and Parliament Streets, now no doubt a thickly peopled portion of Liverpool, but then a common, with ponds of clayey water, and large brick-kilns. Our weapons were stones and loaded sticks.

We, of the 'gentlemen,' were always in the minority, but then we had *esprit de corps*, high-bred pluck. I suppose an average gathering would be sixty 'gentlemen' and one hundred 'blackguards.' Then would come battle,—showers of stones, runnings in (the charge), runnings out (retreat), close encounter, pluck, the white feather, close quarters (crossing bayonets), with sticks rarely, ambush surprise, and all the toils and changes of 'glorious war;' ay, and with some of its dangers too. Rarely a night closed without casualties; in my time were many broken limbs, two boys were killed—one mobbed, the other brick-batted.

All of us, I suppose, carry honourable or dishonourable scars: I bear mine,—cut forehead, cut backhead too, broken fingers. But it was royal excitement for lads, and maybe not altogether bad training. To

the public, however? Well, many a time have I seen it retreating helter-skelter, rushing madly across Parliament Street, pursuers and showers of stones following; a tribe of ladies and a gentleman or so are cut off from shelter, and have to struggle, more or less battered, away from the missiles of followed and following. The British public were more long-suffering then, I think, or redress was more difficult. My deepest dejection was a triumph.

Cut off with three or four others from our party by a select force of the enemy, consisting of a celebrated warrior, a big lad from a cheaper school than ours, and some eight or ten followers, we run for it. It was Saturday afternoon, and early. Away we go over all obstacles, sometimes checking our pursuers by a volley, and then on again. Miles pass; we come to a widish stream, and wade through it up to our knees; up the opposite slope we rush, where we have considerable vantage of height. Here we collect a heap of stones and wait.

Our pursuers come up; they are getting rather weary of the chase, and we have decidedly the best of the running, all being in training, whilst they are a 'mixed lot.' They stop to drink. We had not dared to do so, and this act of bravado aggravates us the more. Throwing himself flat on to the green, the big leader dips his parched mouth into the stream. How thirsty we are! Up we jump, and from our height shower stones upon the unsuspecting foe, with surprising effect, as they, lying down to drink, cannot 'dodge' the falling missiles.

Aiming at the leader, I throw a large piece of slate with all my force. Boomerang-like, it mounts high on the wind, takes the peculiar half-stop half-turn so well known to schoolboys, and descends almost perpendicularly upon the uncovered head of the prostrate leader. It sticks there. He jumps up, staggers, and falls prostrate. He has fainted! No one now thinks of throwing any more. His followers gather round, and presently after consultation draw out the slate. A rush of blood follows. With their caps they bring water and bathe his head, we watching them in terror and suspense. They carry him away presently, and we find our way back unmolested. I thought I had killed him. How sick and sorry I was! I dared not tell any one at home, and had my miserable days and sleepless nights to myself. The victim of my skill in slate-throwing did not show up amongst the adverse host for weeks, and then he looked pale enough. But the incident did not cure any of us of the pursuit of war, and fighting went on.

I suppose such frays would be well-nigh impossible to-day. Even then the change was coming, and the new police were come. Complaints poured in upon the magistracy, and we began, we 'spotted' ones, to run serious risks. One of us, for instance, a fine lad named H——, the son of the chief magistrate of Liverpool, was captured 'in detail,' as the Irish constable said, and brought before his father, who gave him the severest first sentence to *be* given—I think a day's imprisonment and a fine. Poor H—— was caught again red-handed, and his father gave him the heaviest second sentence which

the law permitted, more imprisonment and heavier fine, at the same time thanking the police for their conduct regarding his son, and saying that he should enforce the laws irrespective of persons. H—— saw it 'wouldn't pay,' and took to peace pursuits. The thing was being 'put down;' 'old times were changed, old manners gone;' a peeler 'filled' the watchman's 'throne,' and our game of civil war was over.

Miserable is the only word I can apply to my first boarding-school feelings. That I could remain *there* for *five months!* Ha! ha! five *months? five thousand years*, rather! But many a half-year besides that one has slipped away since then. That did not slip, indeed; it crawled with unnatural slowness. Work was heavy. From half-past six A.M. to eight, from nine to twelve, from two to five, from six-thirty to eight. Play was infrequent, and we underwent much of the Blimber process. I learnt a lot of Latin and Greek, certainly, which has never been of the slightest use to me.

A few funny things happened at the school, and some odd things were done. I thought it odd, for example, that M. Mordacque, our French master, should address me at the end of a half-year as follows: 'No doubt you are by far my best pupil, but I have determined to give the prize to the worst one.' Then turning to another boy, he presented him with a copy of some French author; upon the fly-leaf was written, 'To Master J—— M—— as an inducement to greater exertions next half-year.'

Master J—— M—— took out the fly-leaf and took home the French prize in triumph. It was odd that our

head-master, the Rev. C—— W——, should single me out during school hours for special bullyings, beatings, and tasks, and that when school was over he should release me from my tasks, and feast me upon 'apples, oranges, and lemonade.' It was odd that I should be caught by the usher, who was reading prayers, crawling under the table, far away from my place, and that he should insist upon it that I was some one else, and that some one else, notwithstanding my repeated confession, should be expelled for my offence. It was funny that one Sunday morning, when there was to be a total eclipse of the sun, or something of the kind, we boys should all be collected under the Rev. C—— W——'s study window, jabbering about smoked glass, whilst he was busy giving certain finishing touches to his sermon no doubt; that the head-master, lurid with dire wrath, should fling up his window, and present himself foaming with rage to our astonished gaze, a towel round his head, above which his coarse stubbly hair stood on end, and under which his large-featured face showed pale with passion; that he should roar at us to 'get out of that,' under penalty of all things fearful. It was odd, I say, that I, knowing his fitful temper and strong hand as I did, should be so smitten with his ludicrous aspect as to fall into a roar of laughter in his very face. When his anger permitted him to speak, he ordered me into the schoolroom, where, entering presently, he dragged me round the room by my hair to his desk, unlocked the desk and took out his horse-whip, put it back, took it out and put it back twice more; finally locking it up and ordering me to my seat, whence after

a few restless turns he ordered me to his study, where he fairly begged my pardon and feasted me.

Two more 'Merry Christmases;' two 'Happy New Years;' two 'April fools;' two long scamperings upon an ocean of sandy beach backed by an ocean of blue water!

CHAPTER III.

INTRODUCTION TO ENGINEERING—PATRICK BRANWELL BRONTË.

I am 'grown up,' and articled to an Engineer—A Gay Life—Leeds and the White Horse Inn—The Leeds and Bradford Railway—George Robert Stephenson—Patrick Branwell Brontë—My Acquaintance with him—His Genius—His Faults and his Virtues—Letters.

I WAS now 'grown up'—in my own opinion, at any rate—and an articled pupil amongst great men. I was not quite seventeen, I think, at the time, but I learned to smoke, to drink sherry (which I did not like), went to theatres, lived in lodgings, and kept late hours. Oh, I was grown up, no doubt of it! Moreover, I was in every respect my own master—far away, too, from home influences. If I stayed away from office, no questions were asked. We paid high premiums, and had any amount of opportunity to learn our profession: if we neglected our work, whose fault was it but our own? Surely such an age as seventeen is too young altogether for a boy to be thrown utterly upon his own will in a strange town, where he is quite unknown and uncared for. What is an ordinary lad to do? He is at an age when reading cannot satisfy him. He cannot

be expected to spend his hours, evening after evening, in his solitary lodgings,—he who has just left a jolly home, with brothers and sisters, friends and old companions. Where, then, is he to go? what to do? Temptation is just opening to him in every fascinating form. He means no evil, thinks no harm; but a theatre to youth is a fascinating place, with its light, beauty, mirth, and music—very different from those stuffy, dull lodgings! The smiles of beauty *are* then very alluring also, even if that beauty *be* painted. The crash of the brass band, the light-going, pretty partner, *are* very alluring too, even if the smooth, chalked floor *is* the floor of a casino.

Well, I for one do not wonder that so much youth goes wrong, but that so much youth keeps right. *My* particular master, to whom I was handed over, and who received £500 with me, was a married man, still young —not quite thirty, indeed. Surely his house might be a resource for me! So it might have been, but he forgot that. He lived out of town a little way. He invited me to tea *once* when I was seventeen; he invited me to tea a *second* time when I was twenty-four! Perhaps, however, the fault was more mine than his. Nevertheless, I do not intend all this to be the forerunner of anything very terrible in the confessional way, nor, indeed, to be applied personally at all.

I had frequent change of scene and excitement in my profession, quite different from the monotonous routine of so many. Happy days, indeed, were those! We had high spirits, money in abundance, the free run of half-a-dozen stables and tables—contractors' stables

and tables, too; and what *that* meant 'in the days of old,' when we were all railway-mad, may be guessed. Picnics, hard work, dinners, and balls filled up our time. The life was a pleasant and jovial one, but perhaps it was not that best suited to prepare one for the harder life that then lay hid in the future. Balls and practical jokes, noisy suppers and pleasant social gatherings, were perhaps a little too frequent to enable a young man to learn all that he ought to have done of the noble art of civil engineering.

But *that* epoch closed. Returning to my rooms one night, or morning rather, I found my 'walking ticket,' as presently told in relation to my friend, George Robert Stephenson. Never a good-bye to my old friends and companions, whom I saw no more; just a chaffing good-night as a farewell for ever!

My first night in Leeds was a rough one. The 'White Horse Inn' was a type of the old-fashioned coaching-houses, so well described by Dickens when introducing the immortal Sam Weller to Pickwick and the public. It was all unexpected passages, cupboards, and flights of steps, with a single one introduced where the way was darkest, just to entrap strangers to their destruction. It was three or four storeys high, and seemed to ramble over half a mile or so of its side of the street.

I was tired when I arrived, some time towards night, and soon asked to see my room,—and I saw it! It was up three flights of stairs, each tending, seemingly, in a different direction to the others; the intervening passages were long, and led up to blank, white-washed

walls, where the passage seemed to end, but when you were about to give it up as hopeless, you found a sharp turn leading to further complications. My bedroom was an attic. The races were on, or an agricultural exhibition, or a dreary meeting of science—anything as an excuse to a green lad which would keep the best rooms vacant for more fastidious customers.

Hopeless of finding my way to any place in particular if I ventured outside my door, I took to my bed and to sleep. Regardless of all noise,—the heavy tramp of steady and unsteady boots making bedwards, the still louder bang of the same boots when pitched outside the door into the carpetless passage, the noisy street,—all was nothing to me. Yet suddenly, at 2 A.M., I was roused from a sound sleep. To be awakened suddenly, to find yourself in a strange room in the top storey of an old rambling house of which you know nothing—to be roused in the depth of the darkness of a mid-winter night, with the thermometer below freezing-point, is uncomfortable at any time; but to be aroused by the tramp of hasty footsteps, by loud bangings of doors, and by louder cries of 'Fire!' mingled with the screams of awakened chambermaids, is still worse. Notwithstanding cold and discomfort, my readers will not find it difficult to believe that I leapt hastily out of bed and dressed quickly; that is to say, I put on one sock, tried to struggle into my trousers wrong way up, and could not, threw them over my arm, and threw open the door. I retreated a moment before the stifling smoke, but remembering that I must face it or die, dashed into the passage. It was full of suffocating

vapour, and was pitch dark, but I managed to pull myself together and try to think of the way out. The more I thought, unfortunately, the more confused I became. There was nothing for it but to go groping blindly along, stumbling over prostrate figures groaning on the floor.

Suddenly I varied my mode of progression by falling down a dozen or two of stairs. After this feat, I lay a moment contemplating a hemisphere of stars gone mad, and tumbling round, over, or under each other, like the erratic sparks so loth to leave a burnt piece of paper. As I lay contemplatively, like the great Peck-sniff, what time draught, door, and daughter knocked him off his own door-step, I felt the air blow on me more freely, and, rousing to the situation, saw flickerings of light far below. The breeze brought me to the next flight of stairs, and on the landing below them I could see bright flames, and hear the crack of burning wood. Running down the last flight, I arrived just in time to receive the contents of a bucket of ice-cold water. This was an unpleasant experience to an individual in a single garment and a sock, at 2 A.M. on a winter morning in Yorkshire. But I knew all about the fire then; it was confined to the bar, and was already clearly under control. It had been discovered in good time, and I saw it must soon be extinguished. Seeing this, I modestly retired amongst a cluster of hysterical chambermaids, and put on my nether garments, which had the effect of attaching my saturated under garment in clinging folds to my unwilling body.

The front doors were thrown open, and the fire-

engine of the period rattled up, but it was not wanted. Singular was the sight then. The wide-awake public, wrapped and coated, entered at 'the double' amongst the half-dressed, teeth-chattering inmates, who were indeed 'a-cold.' I could stand no more, so, seizing a candle from an amazed chambermaid who was showing the fire a light, I retired to my room. Every inch of the way to it was now photographed upon my memory; I soon reached it, and when warm once more, slept heavily till the morning. When I awoke, I found myself famous to bar and chambermaids, and the coffee-room hero of an hour. 'That's him as went to bed with my candle during the raging of the fire!' But there was no raging, and there should have been no fire.

How absurd it sounds now to say that I was one of the pioneers of a railway between Leeds and Bradford! It was a good time, too. There was a nice, clean country inn, half-way between the two towns; the landlady was a capital cook, and the daughter a very pleasant companion. Somehow, I was always obliged to stop there. Night used to come on unexpectedly, just when I had brought my work up to that point. My horse would lose a shoe just about there, and the blacksmith's was opposite the inn. There was a large foundry near, too; and whether it was the glow from it or the forge, I never could tell, but my men grew overpoweringly thirsty just there. When I mention that the landlord had some bottles in his cellars untried since he took the place, but which I found to contain delicious twenty-year-old port, it will easily be supposed that I liked the

place. By the bye, these unsophisticated folks (Yorkshire, too !), when I asked for a pint of port, gave me an imperial pint out of the bottle, nearly all of it, and charged me two shillings and sixpence. We compromised the matter, to avoid shaking, etc., at three shillings and sixpence the bottle. I bought all that remained when I went away, and rejoiced the hearts of better judges than myself with it afterwards. My landlady's daughter was a Sunday-school teacher. She and her mother would bring their work into my snug parlour, whilst I sat sipping my port and reading aloud Dickens or some other wonder to them. My voice faltered and my hand trembled when I went away ; and she, poor girl, wept upon my shoulder. Two years later I was sent to Stanningley, to test a lot of castings at that very foundry which had so tried my men. I went to the country inn. A matronly woman with a baby in her arms received me, asked my pleasure, and then kissed me, half sadly, half joyfully, telling her story of wedded happiness thereafter. I did not stop at that country inn on that occasion. It looked positively uncomfortable, though as neat and clean as ever.

From Leeds I went to Halifax. It suited me well enough. I had lots of work, and plenty of spare time too. Here I was 'chummed in' with George Robert Stephenson. We had a large double-bedded room together.

Soon after I came to Halifax, I made the acquaintance of a genius of the highest order, Patrick Branwell Brontë, who was at least as talented as any member of that wonderful family. Much my senior, Brontë

took an unusual fancy to me, and I continued, perhaps, his most confidential friend through good and ill until his death. Poor, brilliant, gay, moody, moping, wildly excitable, miserable Brontë! No history records your many struggles after the good,—your wit, brilliance, attractiveness, eagerness for excitement,—all the qualities which made you such 'good company,' and dragged you down to an untimely grave. But you have had a most unnecessary scandal heaped upon you by the author of your sister's *Biography*, which that scandal does its best to spoil.

This generous gentleman in all his ideas, this madman in many of his acts, died at twenty-eight of grief for a woman. But at twenty-two, what a splendid specimen of brain power running wild he was! what glorious talent he had still to waste! That Rector of Haworth little knew how to bring up and bring out his clever family, and the boy least of all. He was a hard, matter-of-fact man. So the girls worked their own way to fame and death, the boy to death only! I knew them all. The father,—upright, handsome, distantly courteous, white-haired, tall; knowing me as his son's friend, he would treat me in the Grandisonian fashion, coming himself down to the little inn to invite me, a boy, up to his house, where I would be coldly uncomfortable until I could escape with Patrick Branwell to the moors. The daughters,—distant and distrait, large of nose, small of figure, red of hair, prominent of spectacles; showing great intellectual development, but with eyes constantly cast down, very silent, painfully retiring. This was about the time of their first literary adventures, I suppose—say

1843 or 1844. Branwell was very like them, almost insignificantly small—one of his life's trials. He had a mass of red hair, which he wore brushed high off his forehead,—to help his height, I fancy; a great, bumpy, intellectual forehead, nearly half the size of the whole facial contour; small ferrety eyes, deep sunk, and still further hidden by the never removed spectacles; prominent nose, but weak lower features. He had a downcast look, which never varied, save for a rapid momentary glance at long intervals. Small and thin of person, he was the reverse of attractive at first sight.

This plain specimen of humanity, who died unhonoured, might have made the world of literature and art ring with the name of which he was so proud. When I first met him, he was station-master at a small roadside place on the Manchester and Leeds Railway, Luddendenfoot by name. The line was only just opened. This station was a rude wooden hut, and there was no village near at hand. Had a position been chosen for this strange creature for the express purpose of driving him several steps to the bad, this must have been it. Alone in the wilds of Yorkshire, with few books, little to do, no prospects, and wretched pay, with no society congenial to his better tastes, but plenty of wild, rollicking, hard-headed, half-educated manufacturers, who would welcome him to their houses, and drink with him as often as he chose to come,—what was this morbid man, who couldn't bear to be alone, to do?

I always have liked scamps with brains. Here was

one, as great a scamp as could be desired, and with an unexpected stock of brains indeed. He took to me amazingly; I suppose from my difference to his then enforced companions, for I was very young, and had the ideas and habits of a gentleman. Nay, I could meet him, sometimes, with quotation for quotation even in the languages, other than English, which he most affected. On his side, he had a fund of information, experience, and anecdote, which he poured forth freely for my benefit, not at first showing me anything of the rough side of his nature.

Now this Luddendenfoot was but three or four miles from my place by rail, of which I was free and he too, so that we saw one another frequently enough. This man of the world of twenty-two had already played parts. He had been usher in a school, which he left in disgust; the lads, I think, ridiculed his downcast smallness. He had been private tutor also, and when that failed (such was this man's versatility) he had established himself in Bradford, at nineteen or twenty years of age, as a portrait painter self-taught, and had achieved considerable success, till eccentricity or desire of change removed him. Then came a short time of which I never heard an explanation; but I fancy that he 'gave it best,' as colonials say, for a time, and then probably moped, and gave trouble at home. I am sure, indeed, that he must have done so; for he had at that time been studying De Quincey, and, with the obstinate determination of doing himself whatever any one else had done, he positively began the practice of opium-eating. He did this until it became a habit, and when it had seized upon his

nervous system, he underwent the torture of the damned, or of De Quincey at least.[1]

Then Brontë came to Luddendenfoot. I think I did him so much good that he recovered himself of his habits there after my advent. But he was ever in extremes,

[1] I may mention an incident within my own knowledge here, as illustrating the devilish power of opium. Quite lately (1876) it has been my lot to visit professionally from house to house, as a member of a Royal Commission, many of the lowest parts of this city (Sydney, New South Wales) — no agreeable task! Amongst the refuse, so to say, of the very lowest, are the Chinese. Hard-working, careful, conscientious, *cleanly* people I have found them in the country (and I have had control over many). In the back slums of the town they are horrible. Fancy a nest of hovels in this climate shut into a cul-de-sac, approached from an alley which itself has earned notoriety for filth and riot, approached by a gateway six feet wide, between high blank walls; a cul-de-sac widening out to twenty feet by forty feet, enclosed on three sides by the lofty walls of a leather factory; within, its space varies, abominations giving out foul sights and smells! Fancy, then, against these walls any number of hovels, built of rotten wood, old metal, sides of kerosene tins, reeking with vermin and filth, the usual size about seven feet by six feet, and perhaps five to seven feet high! The usual furniture is a bed, crammed necessarily against the wall and side—a bed so dirty that it is no longer easy to distinguish what may have been white from what always was black; and a table of any kind. There are no windows and no chimney. Each of these kennels or pigsties is tenanted ordinarily by three occupants, a Chinaman and two white women,—ay, white women, still sometimes young and bearing remains of comeliness! On extraordinary occasions, as many more poor wretches will be there, and the orgies cannot be told. Now my companion in this inquiry was an alderman of the city of long standing. We found in one of these places two girls, one lying on the bed, the other sitting upon the solitary door-step, looking positively clean and tidy, and working at some garment. The alderman happened to recognise this girl as the daughter of one of his tenants. He had heard, too, that she had given trouble. 'Why, Mary, what are *you* doing here?' he asked. She answered, 'Oh, nothing!' But by degrees she made him understand that she had left home and 'gone to the bad.' 'But even so,' he said, 'why in such a horrible place as this? There were evil ways enough without *this* degradation.' She answered, driven desperate, 'Curse you, who else will give us opium? I can't live without it.' And she had been away from home but a month or two.

gloriously great or as ingloriously small. He would discourse with wondrous knowledge upon subjects, moral, intellectual, philosophical, for hours, and afterwards accompany his audience to the nearest public-house, and recruit his exhausted powers by copious libations. He was proud of his name, his strength, and his abilities. In his fits of passion I have seen him drive his doubled fist through the panel of a door: it seemed to soothe him; it certainly bruised his knuckles. At times we would drive over in a gig to Haworth (twelve miles), and visit his people. He was then at his best, and would be eloquent and amusing, although sometimes he would burst into tears when returning, and swear that he meant to amend. I believe, however, that he was half mad, and could not control himself. On one occasion he thought I was disposed to treat him distantly at a party, and he retired in great dudgeon. When I arrived at my lodgings the same evening, I found the following, necessarily an impromptu:—

'The man who will not know another,
Whose heart can never sympathize,
Who loves not comrade, friend, or brother,
Unhonoured lives—unnoticed dies.
His frozen eye, his bloodless heart,
Nature, repugnant, bids depart.

'O Grundy! born for nobler aim,
Be thine the task to shun such shame;
And henceforth never think that he
Who gives his hand in courtesy
To one who kindly feels to him,
His gentle birth or name can dim.

'However mean a man may be,
Know man *is* man as well as thee;
However high thy gentle line,
Know he who writes can rank with thine;
And though his frame be worn and dead,
Some light still glitters round his head.

'Yes! though his tottering limbs seem old,
His heart and blood are not yet cold.
Ah, Grundy! shun his evil ways,
His restless nights, his troubled days;
But never slight his mind, which flies,
Instinct with noble sympathies,
Afar from spleen and treachery,
To thought, to kindness, and to thee.

'P. B. BRONTË.'

One of Brontë's peculiarities was a habit of making use of the word 'sir' when addressing even his most intimate friends and acquaintances; and if he made a quotation in Greek, Latin, or French, he always translated it: '"Fiat justitia, ruat cœlum;" that means, "Justice must be done though the heavens fall." I beg your pardon, sir, but I have been so much amongst the barbarians of the hills that I forgot,' etc. etc. He one day sketched a likeness of me, which my mother kept until her death, and which is perhaps treasured in a more moderate manner among my sisterhood now. He wrote a poem called 'Brontë,' illustrative of the life of Nelson, which, at his special request, I submitted for criticism to Leigh Hunt, Miss Martineau, and others. All spoke in high terms of it. He gave it to me only about two or three weeks before his death, and Frank Fowler, a literary aspirant, got possession of it for his Sydney

magazine known as the *Month.* He did not publish it, but when he left for England he kept the manuscript. Brontë drew a finished elevation of one portion of Westminster Abbey from memory, having been but once in London some years before. It was no mean achievement, for the sketch was correct in every particular. He once wrote an epitaph upon me, with a drawing of a marble mausoleum at its head. My mother kept *that* too, and I remember nothing of it except that I wrote one in reply to it.

One very important statement which he made to me throws some light upon a question which I observe has long vexed the critics; that is, the authorship of *Wuthering Heights.* It is well-nigh incredible that a book so marvellous in its strength, and in its dissection of the most morbid passions of diseased minds, could have been written by a young girl like Emily Brontë, who never saw much of the world or knew much of mankind, and whose studies of life and character, if they are entirely her own, must have been chiefly evolved from her own imagination. Patrick Brontë declared to me, and what his sister said bore out the assertion, that he wrote a great portion of *Wuthering Heights* himself. Indeed, it is impossible for me to read that story without meeting with many passages which I feel certain *must* have come from his pen. The weird fancies of diseased genius with which he used to entertain me in our long talks at Luddendenfoot, reappear in the pages of the novel, and I am inclined to believe that the very plot was his invention rather than his sister's.

There was an old fortune-teller at Haworth, ninety-

five years of age, and Branwell and the 'three curates' used often to go and consult her. She was a wonderful old soul, and, I think, believed thoroughly in her arts. At any rate, she was visited, either in jest or earnest, by the 'carriage people' of two counties; and we often took our day's spree on horseback or in 'trap' thitherward. Nay, she entirely altered the life of a friend of mine, a draughtsman, who was so impressed by her wonderful knowledge of him and his doings, that he went home from an interview with her and carried out all she had told him, even to marrying a girl towards whom he had not previously been attracted.

To return to 'Brontë.' After a long time something went wrong. How could it be otherwise? It was never the special forte of a genius to manage sixpences. He left the railway; and my work in that part of Yorkshire also came to a close for a time. I went to Manchester, Rugby, London, Rochester, Warwick, Maidstone, as my profession demanded, and we lost sight of each other. After three years, however, fate sent me once again into Yorkshire, and I found myself within seven miles of Haworth. The first letter which I received was from Brontë. He was ill and unhappy. I offer no apology for giving extracts from some of the letters of this life-wrecked brother of great sisters, both because he was one of a house of noble intellect in the world of England's history; because there may be yet, here and there, one who believes in his memory; and chiefly because those letters show the struggles of a man very different, at worst, from the social demon of Mrs. Gaskell's creation. Although the earlier of these

letters was written at a period antecedent to that at which my history is now arrived, I have, for the sake of convenience, placed them here consecutively.

'HAWORTH, *9th June* 1842.

'DEAR SIR,—Any feeling of disappointment which the perusal of your letter might otherwise have caused, was allayed by its kindly and considerate tone; but I should have been a fool, under present circumstances, to entertain any sanguine hopes respecting situations, etc. You ask me why I do not turn my attention elsewhere; and so I would have done, but that most of my relatives and more immediate connections are clergymen, or by a private life somewhat removed from this busy world. As for the Church—I have not one mental qualification, save, perhaps, hypocrisy, which would make me cut a figure in its pulpits. Mr. James Montgomery and another literary gentleman, who have lately seen something of my "head work," wish me to turn my attention to literature, and, along with that advice, they give me plenty of puff and praise. All very well, but I have little conceit of myself, and great desire for activity. You say that you write with feelings similar to those with which you last left me; keep them no longer. I trust I am somewhat changed, or should not be worth a thought; and though nothing could ever give me your buoyant spirits and an outward man corresponding therewith, I may, in dress and appearance, emulate something like ordinary decency. And now, wherever coming years may lead—Greenland's snows or sands of Afric—I trust,' etc.

'*25th October* 1842.

'MY DEAR SIR,—There is no misunderstanding. I have had a long attendance at the deathbed of the Rev. Mr. Weightman, one of my dearest friends, and now I am attending at the deathbed of my aunt, who has been for twenty years as my mother. I expect her to die in a few hours.

'As my sisters are far from home, I have had much on my mind, and these things must serve as an apology for what was never intended as neglect of your friendship to us.

'I had meant not only to have written to you, but to the Rev. James Martineau, gratefully and sincerely acknowledging the receipt of his most kindly and truthful criticism,—at least in advice, though too generous far in praise,—but one sad ceremony must, I fear, be gone through first. Give my most sincere respects to Mr. Stephenson, and excuse this scrawl; my eyes are too dim with sorrow to see well. Believe me, your not very happy but obliged friend and servant,

'P. B. BRONTË.'

'*29th October* 1842.

'MY DEAR SIR,—As I don't want to lose a *real* friend, I write in deprecation of the tone of your letter. Death only has made me neglectful of your kindness, and I have lately had so much experience with him, that your sister would *not now* blame me for indulging in gloomy visions either of this world or another. I am incoherent, I fear, but I have been waking two nights witnessing such agonizing suffering as I would not wish my worst enemy

to endure; and I have now lost the pride and director of all the happy days connected with my childhood. I have suffered such sorrow since I last saw you at Haworth, that I do not now care if I were fighting in India or ——, since, when the mind is depressed, danger is the most effectual cure. But you don't like croaking, I know well, only I request you to understand from my two notes that I have not forgotten *you*, but *myself*.—Yours,' etc.

The gap here of two and a half years is that previously mentioned when I had left Yorkshire.

'HAWORTH, NEAR BRADFORD,
22d May 1845.

'DEAR SIR,—I cannot avoid the temptation to cheer my spirits by scribbling a few lines to you while I sit here alone,—all the household being at church,—the sole occupant of an ancient parsonage among lonely hills, which probably will never hear the whistle of an engine till I am in my grave.

'After experiencing, since my return home, extreme pain and illness, with mental depression worse than either, I have at length acquired health and strength and soundness of mind, far superior, I trust, to anything shown by that miserable wreck you used to know under my name. I can now speak cheerfully, and enjoy the company of another without the stimulus of six glasses of whisky; I can write, think, and act with some apparent approach to resolution, and I only want a motive for exertion to be happier than I have been for years. But I feel my recovery from *almost insanity* to

be retarded by having nothing to listen to except the wind moaning among old chimneys and older ash trees, —nothing to look at except heathery hills, walked over when life had all to hope for and nothing to regret with me,—no one to speak to except crabbed old Greeks and Romans who have been dust the last five thousand years. And yet this quiet life, from its contrast, makes the year passed at Luddendenfoot appear like a night-mare, for I would rather give my hand than undergo again the grovelling carelessness, the malignant yet cold debauchery, the determination to find how far mind could carry body without both being chucked into hell, which too often marked my conduct when there, lost as I was to all I really liked, and seeking relief in the indulgence of feelings which form the black spot on my character.

'Yet I have something still left in me which may do me service. But I ought not to remain too long in solitude, for the world soon forgets those who have bidden it "Good-bye." Quiet is an excellent cure, but no medicine should be continued after a patient's recovery, so I am about, though ashamed of the business, to dun you for answers to—' (Here follow inquiries as to obtaining some appointment.)

'Excuse the trouble I am giving to one on whose kindness I have no claim, and for whose services I am offering no return except gratitude and thankfulness, which are already due to you. Give my sincere regards to Mr. Stephenson. A word or two to show that you have not altogether forgotten me will greatly please yours, etc., 'P. B. BRONTË.'

But Brontë got no situation with us. Indeed, it was altogether improbable, for the cause of his leaving his appointment had been too notoriously glaring. His absence, carousing with congenial drinkers (anything rather than 'congenial spirits' were those rough, coarse, half-educated men), had been of days' continuance. He had a porter at the insignificant station where he was to whom he left all the work, and the result was that very serious defalcations were discovered, and the inquiry which succeeded brought out everything. Brontë was not suspected of the theft himself, but was convicted of constant and culpable carelessness, so that it was almost hopeless to seek for work with *us* again. He remained a year longer at home, and then came the beginning of the end. I had one or two desponding letters during 1845 and 1846, and then he wrote to tell me that he was appointed tutor to ——. This information was followed by a silence upon any subject of interest to the public of some two years, during which time fate was weaving her web, and enshrouding him in its meshes. The next letter, and the others which followed quickly, are all without dates, but must have been written within a few months of January 1848.

'I fear you will burn my present letter on recognising the handwriting; but if you will read it through, you will perhaps rather pity than spurn the distress of mind which could prompt my communication, after a silence of nearly three (to me) eventful years. While very ill and confined to my room, I wrote to you two months ago, hearing that you were resident engineer of the

Skipton Railway, to the inn at Skipton. I never received any reply, and as my letter asked only for one day of your society, to ease a very weary mind in the company of a friend who *always* had what I always wanted, but most want now, *cheerfulness*, I am sure you never received my letter, or your heart would have prompted an answer.

'Since I last shook hands with you in Halifax, two summers ago, my life till lately has been one of apparent happiness and indulgence. You will ask, "Why does he complain, then?" I can only reply by showing the under-current of distress which bore my bark to a whirlpool, despite the surface waves of life that seemed floating me to peace. In a letter begun in the spring of 1848, and never finished owing to incessant attacks of illness, I tried to tell you that I was tutor to the son of ——, a wealthy gentleman whose wife is sister to the wife of ——, M.P. for the county of ——, and the cousin of Lord ——. This lady (though her husband detested me) showed me a degree of kindness which, when I was deeply grieved one day at her husband's conduct, ripened into declarations of more than ordinary feeling. My admiration of her mental and personal attractions, my knowledge of her unselfish sincerity, her sweet temper, and unwearied care for others, with but unrequited return where most should have been given, . . . although she is seventeen years my senior, all combined to an attachment on my part, and led to reciprocations which I had little looked for. During nearly three years I had daily "troubled pleasure, soon chastised by fear." Three months since I received a furious letter from my employer,

threatening to shoot me if I returned from my vacation, which I was passing at home ; and letters from her lady's-maid and physician informed me of the outbreak, only checked by her firm courage and resolution that whatever harm came to her, none should come to me. . . . I have lain during nine long weeks utterly shattered in body and broken down in mind. The probability of her becoming free to give me herself and estate never rose to drive away the prospect of her decline under her present grief. I dreaded, too, the wreck of my mind and body, which, God knows, during a short life have been severely tried. Eleven continuous nights of sleepless horror reduced me to almost blindness, and being taken into Wales to recover, the sweet scenery, the sea, the sound of music caused me fits of unspeakable distress. You will say, "What a fool!" but if you knew the many causes I have for sorrow which I cannot even hint at here, you would perhaps pity as well as blame. At the kind request of Mr. Macaulay and Mr. Baines, I have striven to arouse my mind by writing something worthy of being read, but I really cannot do so. Of course you will despise the writer of all this. I can only answer that the writer does the same, and would not wish to live if he did not hope that work and change may yet restore him.

'Apologizing sincerely for what seems like whining egotism, and hardly daring to hint about days when in your company I could sometimes sink the thoughts which "remind me of departed days," I fear departed never to return,—I remain,' etc.

'HAWORTH, BRADFORD, YORK.

'DEAR SIR,—I must again trouble you with—' (Here comes another prayer for employment, with, at the same time, a confession that his health alone renders the wish all but hopeless). Subsequently he says: 'The gentleman with whom I have been is dead. His property is left in trust for the family, provided I do not see the widow; and if I do, it reverts to the executing trustees, with ruin to her. She is now distracted with sorrows and agonies; and the statement of her case, as given by her coachman, who has come to see me at Haworth, fills me with inexpressible grief. Her mind is distracted to the verge of insanity, and mine is so wearied that I wish I were in my grave.—Yours very sincerely, 'P. B. BRONTË.'

Soon there is another letter, wearying for work, although illness of body and mind have brought on sleeplessness and disordered action of the heart:—

'Since I saw Mr. George Gooch, I have suffered much from the accounts of the declining health of her whom I must love most in this world, and who, for my fault, suffers sorrows which surely were never her due. My father, too, is now quite blind, and from such causes literary pursuits have become matters I have no heart to wield. If I could see you it would be a sincere pleasure, but . . . Perhaps your memory of me may be dimmed, for you have known little in me worth remembering; but I still think often with pleasure of yourself, though so different from me in head and mind.'

I invited him to come to me at the Devonshire Hotel, Skipton, a distance of some seventeen miles, and in reply received the last letter he ever wrote :—

'If I have strength enough for the journey, and the weather be tolerable, I shall feel happy in visiting you at the Devonshire on Friday, the 31st of this month. The sight of a face I have been accustomed to see and like when I was happier and stronger, now proves my best medicine.'

As he never came to see me, I shortly made up my mind to visit him at Haworth, and was shocked at the wrecked and wretched appearance he presented. Yet he still craved for an appointment of any kind, in order that he might try the excitement of change; of course uselessly. I now heard his painful history from his own lips,—his happiness, his misery, and the sad story which was the end. He was miserable. At home the sternness of his father had never relaxed, and he was unfitted for outside social companionship. He was lost now, for he had taken again to opium.

Very soon I went to Haworth again to see him, for the last time. From the little inn I sent for him to the great, square, cold-looking Rectory. I had ordered a dinner for two, and the room looked cosy and warm, the bright glass and silver pleasantly reflecting the sparkling firelight, deeply toned by the red curtains. Whilst I waited his appearance, his father was shown in. Much of the Rector's old stiffness of manner was gone. He spoke of Branwell with more affection than I had

ever heretofore heard him express, but he also spoke almost hopelessly. He said that when my message came, Branwell was in bed, and had been almost too weak for the last few days to leave it; nevertheless, he had insisted upon coming, and would be there immediately. We parted, and I never saw him again.

Presently the door opened cautiously, and a head appeared. It was a mass of red, unkempt, uncut hair, wildly floating round a great, gaunt forehead; the cheeks yellow and hollow, the mouth fallen, the thin white lips not trembling but shaking, the sunken eyes, once small, now glaring with the light of madness,—all told the sad tale but too surely. I hastened to my friend, greeted him in my gayest manner, as I knew he best liked, drew him quickly into the room, and forced upon him a stiff glass of hot brandy. Under its influence, and that of the bright, cheerful surroundings, he looked frightened—frightened of himself. He glanced at me a moment, and muttered something of leaving a warm bed to come out into the cold night. Another glass of brandy, and returning warmth gradually brought him back to something like the Brontë of old. He even ate some dinner, a thing which he said he had not done for long; so our last interview was pleasant, though grave. I never knew his intellect clearer. He described himself as waiting anxiously for death—indeed, longing for it, and happy, in these his sane moments, to think that it was so near. He once again declared that that death would be due to the story I knew, and to nothing else.

When at last I was compelled to leave, he quietly

drew from his coat sleeve a carving-knife, placed it on the table, and holding me by both hands, said that, having given up all thoughts of ever seeing me again, he imagined when my message came that it was a call from Satan. Dressing himself, he took the knife, which he had long had secreted, and came to the inn, with a full determination to rush into the room and stab the occupant. In the excited state of his mind he did not recognise me when he opened the door, but my voice and manner conquered him, and 'brought him home to himself,' as he expressed it. I left him standing bare-headed in the road, with bowed form and dropping tears. A few days afterwards he died.

Poor fellow! this short story by a weak hand is all the biography his memory will know. His age was twenty-eight. I have always been of opinion that it remained for me to clear his name from the weight of accusation heaped upon it. I knew him, and indeed, I believe, all the family, better than Mrs. Gaskell did. He was a dear old friend, who from the rich storehouse of his knowledge taught me much. I make my humble effort to do my duty to his memory. His letters to me revealed more of his soul's struggles than probably was known to any other. Patrick Branwell Brontë was no domestic demon—he was just a man moving in a mist, who lost his way. More sinned against, mayhap, than sinning, *at least* he proved the reality of his sorrows. They killed him, and it needed not that his memory should have been tarnished, much, as I think, to the detriment of the *Biography* of his sister. I am desirous to be anything rather than a hostile critic of

the memoir. Mrs. Gaskell was an intimate friend of my family, and her husband at one time my father's colleague in the ministry. I admire *Mary Barton* and her other novels greatly. Towards her memory I have the kindest feeling.; but *Fiat justitia!* and I must say what I can in favour of my old friend.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE AS A CIVIL ENGINEER.

The Electric Telegraph—Experiences at Elland—Yorkshire Hospitality—The Plug Riots—Attack upon the Military—Exciting Scene—'Bill the Banker,' a Navvy and a Hero—A Model Manager—'Directions to Engine-drivers'—George Stephenson—I play an Impudent Trick on the Father of Railways.

WITH extending railways came other astonishing improvements and inventions. Now we learnt to 'span the earth,' and to annihilate time and space. The Electric Telegraph! Was its discovery, or rather its practical application, equal in importance to that of railways? However that may be, it was a wonderful stride forward. The so often vexed question as to who the actual discoverer was, arises again here, and will probably never be quite decided, unless Shakespeare receive the praise. But one who claims to have been the inventor is Captain Cook. Certainly he took active and constant measures to ensure its extension. On such a mission, the following incident, 'pleasant but wrong,' occurred.

I was at the time resident engineer of a short branch

from Halifax to historical Elland,—a kind of miniature railway, which had upon its four miles of length, viaduct, tunnel, heavy rock cutting, and bridge over the river. This was the last work of construction of the 'Manchester and Leeds' Railway, and I soon afterwards resigned it into the hands of Mr. Hawkshaw. As the 'Lancashire and Yorkshire,' the old Manchester and Leeds soon extended itself in every direction. Shortly before this change, I received a letter instructing me to meet Captain Cook, and the head of the house of Gooch, Thomas Longridge, at the Elland station, to walk thence over my completing branch, of which Gooch was consulting engineer, in order to mark the best line for erecting a telegraph to Halifax. Thence we were to make rapid way to Bradford, examining the country for a proposed railway as well as a telegraph route. We had two days in all, for the gentlemen were to get back to Elland for the night train to London.

Elland station, 7 A.M., and the night train disgorges the two travellers, who look 'seedy' after their journey, and in anything but a favourable condition for two days' hard work. A light breakfast, and we are off. Over river, through tunnel, we wend our way, until three miles towards Halifax are accomplished. Here resided a rich, jolly, hospitable Yorkshire manufacturer. His house, just beside the line where is a deep rock cutting, has received some damage from our 'blasts,' and a certain amount of danger is run by his household, as evidenced by certain large pieces of stone disfiguring his flower-beds, and two or three 'specimens' which had come through his roof. This infliction he bore well, removing the younger

members of his family, and receiving a moderate compensation eventually. Now this gentleman, having got wind of our coming, meets us, and requests us to accept of a slight luncheon. This, of course, is quite opposed to our programme, for our motto is 'forward,' but it is well to keep upon friendly terms with a gentleman whose house you are knocking about his ears; besides, he is very pressing in his invitation, and after a few hesitating refusals we consent, 'just for one hour,' Gooch declaring that we need not have dinner at Halifax, so that there will be no delay after all.

We had no dinner at Halifax, but there *was* delay notwithstanding. We enter a large dining-room, wherein is a long table spread with every luxury procurable: hot joints, game pies, grapes from the hot-house, pine-apples, wines, etc. Who can withstand such a host and such a luncheon? Not weary travellers and hungry youngsters. So the mild lunch prolongs itself as our hearts expand and our faces beam. Feeble and yet feebler remonstrances are first combated and then pooh-poohed, and at three o'clock they cease. At four we are obscured by clouds of smoke; at five we are singing glees and comic songs; later yet, our host is 'a jolly good fellow;' and when at midnight we take our leave, the worthy man has one arm affectionately round a gate-post, whilst he shakes our hands as we file out. We walk into Halifax, and as we go, Gooch, the most temperate of mortals,—never during ten years of intimate association did I see him in the slightest degree 'elevated,' save only then,—confides to me as he trudges energetically along, that he

'does' like a little jollity in an evening, it makes one so bright and comfortable next morning. He is a dozen years my senior, and ought to know.

We arrive at the inn, they retire, when I and a fellow-pupil make our way to our lodgings. Next morning early we appear at the inn to breakfast as ordered, perhaps the least thing headachy, but looking to our coffee to set us right. To us enters Captain Cook, who had shown no sign of excess last night, and shows none of repentance now. To make up for our lapse, we were to make time in every way, and still it was possible to get over the ground to Bradford, and catch the night mail at Elland. But where is Gooch? The waiter is interrogated. He has called the gentleman twice, and received but unintelligible answers;—he has ventured to enter the room, but has been told to go away and not to bother. We breakfast. The day slips away. A ring from the bedroom about eleven A.M. gives us hopes that something may yet be done. But it is only a request for sherry and soda. We go to billiards. Another ring, and an order for brandy and soda. An hour later, and the waiter informs us that the gent in No. 6 is 'hawful hill.' The gent in No. 6 rings again, and wants me. He is sitting up in bed, toying with some broth, and looks limp; his head is turbaned in a wet towel. He tells me to order lunch and not wait for him, then to order dinner at seven o'clock, '*in time to catch the train.*' About three in the afternoon he makes his appearance, cadaverous. We lounge to the old church and mount to the tower, over which we lean, listlessly throwing bits of mortar at the gravestones. Gooch makes

here one expiring effort to improve the occasion, but fails.

We march back to dinner, of which our invalid partakes feebly, but at length revives somewhat under the influence of a glass or two of sherry. Then do I meanly remind him of his last night's remark about morning jollity, but now he 'does not seem to see it.' They were in good time for the night mail.

That was the time of the 'plug' riots. The rioters stopped work wherever they went by the simple process of withdrawing the plugs from boilers and raking out fires. Then the 'hands' of the abused factory joined the main body, and all 'went marching on.' Gathering in Lancashire, and doing much mischief in the clustering towns around Manchester, they marched through Rochdale, Littleborough, and Todmorden in ever increasing numbers, until one afternoon they were reported at Sowerby Bridge. Another hour or two, and in rude attempt at order they marched down the main street of Halifax, singing some wild song. The women went first, four abreast, and were followed by a long procession, some thousands strong, bearing colours of more or less pretensions. Then they dispersed, under orders given by a man on horseback, who told them what mills to visit upon their work of destruction.

My opinion of these mob gatherings, having seen one or two of them, is that few of the people, excepting enthusiasts among the enthusiastic, marched many miles from home, because multitudes were seen returning to the various towns passed through; and had it not been so, their numbers must soon have

been counted by hundreds of thousands. Moreover, I had unusual opportunities of noticing them closely, and was surprised at the number whom I recognised as factory hands round about, and navvies also, who had joined for sheer mischief, I suppose. But at Halifax, steps had been taken to end these riots. Many of the inhabitants had been called out as special constables; several companies of the 60th were also concentrated here, as well as a picked company of lancers. The mob confronted these at the temporary barracks, an old inn in the main street, with a courtyard and strong iron gates. But the rioters were not steady. Some had marched far, no doubt; all were hungry; evening was coming on; and although a few stones were thrown, chiefly, of course, by women, when the chief magistrate came forward to read the Riot Act, the mob dispersed for that time peaceably.

Now my office was at a place called 'Salter Hebble,' some half-way between Halifax and Elland, the nearest station, and upon the main road. As I walked from Halifax next morning towards this place of business, I was quite amazed at the number of people who were hurrying in the same direction as myself. The route was like a road to a fair or to races. All were going the same way; and the crowd seemed to be gathering just opposite to my office.

Salter Hebble was — and still is, I suppose — a hamlet, standing upon one of the short, steep hills common to Yorkshire. The road from Elland, trending generally westward, shares a sweet valley with the canal and river for some distance, then crossing

the canal, maintains a westward course, the river taking a bend southward and the canal a sharpish turn eastward, by which it reaches Halifax. The road braves the abrupt hill, which has put to rout river and canal, and, encircling its northern slope, gains an altitude of some hundred or two of feet above its late companions. Of course, as the road wound round the hillside, it commanded an increasing slope, succeeded by a tableland of valley stretching towards the receding canal. Now on the southern side of this road there was a number of short lanes or alleys, which sloped upwards toward the summit of the hill, and commanded, in consequence of their superior level, a considerable stretch of the highway.

My office was at the foot of the hill, just opposite the point where the road began to wind upwards from the river and canal. It had been built before the road was made, and the ground floor was below the level of the path; so the main entrance was on what had been the first floor, and was approached by a few stone steps. I wondered much as I entered the building at the multitude of persons collected in the neighbourhood, talking eagerly, but all busy—women as well as men—in rushing along the various lanes over my head with arms and aprons full of stones, taken from the macadamized heaps of blue metal placed along the turnpike road.

Suddenly all is still. No one is to be seen, and nothing is to be heard save a loud whistle from the height. Now two omnibuses come rattling down from Halifax at a gallop, surrounded by a guard of lancers, twenty-

five or thirty strong, and accompanied by a magistrate in plain clothes, at whose side rides a gaily-dressed cornet. Down they rattle with all the pride and pomp of a crack regiment. Bravo! they have stolen a march upon the ambush; and although there are heaps of stones enough to scatter the brains of every soldier there, they pass safely. They have started an hour earlier than the time necessary, and so the conspirators are not ready.

There is plenty of ammunition, but no army. Men and women have dropped down wherever they happened to be, and no one commands the great heaps prepared for the reception of the soldiers and the release of the prisoners. But the return! The prisoners will be sent to London, Manchester, or elsewhere, doubtless;—but these thirty gallant men? That the mob mean vengeance is too clear. The gathering multitude increases momentarily, the collecting of stones goes on unceasingly. My windows and small balcony command the winding stretch of road over which the hussars must come back again. Where the road crosses the canal, two hundred yards away, a bridle-path leads down to the towing-path. Here the canal turns suddenly to the right, skirting the hill, and, when opposite the ambush, there is a steep slope forty or fifty feet high, and a flat lowland one hundred yards across, between it and the hill. I see that if I can only meet the returning troops and show this by-path to them, they may escape. How to reach them is the question. I must try it!

Smoking indifferently, as was my habit, and leaning

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out of my window, as was my habit too, I speak awhile to some of our own men idling around, then descend to the steps on pretence of hearing some report or making some inquiry. I lean against the iron rail and smoke on; then I go quietly and slowly down the steps into the road, and stand there, still talking to my men about the works. Presently I call my especial chain man to come with me to see how the contractor has progressed with the foundations of the big bridge (a daily custom). We lounge along the line; if I can but turn that curve, the thing is done! It wants twenty minutes yet to train time; the soldiers will wait to see the prisoners off, and by cutting across the fields I can yet be in plenty of time. Whether my man played false, or my manner was not so easy as I thought, or orders had been given that I was to be kept in at all hazards, I don't know, but I failed. I have hardly got a dozen yards from my door when heavy hands are on my shoulders, and I turn and see two of my *own* men.

'Thou munnot go t'ut brigg to-day, sir.'

'Why, what nonsense is this?'

'We be main sorry, sir, varry, but thou mun come back agean. Thou'rt to go whoam into t'house, and we two are to watch thee, loike. Thou'lt nobbut be murdered, and thou cannot do ony guid. There are a matter of fower thousand folk looking on; so coome, sir. Thou'rt not to be fettled, but thou'rt to be kept insoide o' t'house.'

So I go back, and look on helplessly at a scene the like of which I do not wish to see again. After a long and anxious period of waiting, at last gaily and carelessly

come the soldiers, chattering one with another, their duty done, and their accoutrements glittering in the sunshine. They slow into a walk as they breast Salter Hebble Hill. Then a loud voice shouts, 'Now, lads, give it 'em!' From every wall rises a crowd of infuriated men, and down comes a shower of stones, bricks, boulders, like a close fall of hail. Great stones, hurled by a thousand strong hands, jostle and split, diverging upon that small space where ride the lancers in all the pomp of military pride. 'Gallop! gallop!' comes the order, as their leader spurs his horse up the steep hill. But the men, jammed together, cannot gallop. They come down pell-mell, horses and riders. Those who can get through, ride off at speed after their officer, without thought for those behind. Indeed, delay is death, or something like it. Down go horses and riders, rolling over each other, under that hell shower.

This was the scene enacted under my window, where I sat helpless. Then the command came, 'Cease throwing.' Eight horsemen, bleeding and helpless, crawled about the road seeking shelter. Some lay still as death. Now and again a horse struggled to rise, and with shrill scream fell back upon the ground. A man or horse once or twice, less hurt than their fellows, limped slowly away. Down come the hosts now, and tearing the belts and accoutrements from the prostrate hussars, the saddles and bridles from their horses, they give three cheers and depart. A noble deed in truth to cheer for! One man, said to be *the* crack man of his crack regiment, lay dead under his dead horse; another died in a few minutes; and I believe that several were long in hospital. Some

ten or more horses were killed or disabled, the magistrate had his arm broken, and the only man of those thirty who escaped scatheless was the officer, Cornet Peel, who, being leader when he gave the necessary order to gallop, escaped the shower of stones concentrated upon the mass behind him. The road looked like a winter lane after a heavy hailstorm when the deed was done.

Presently came swooping down at a run, with bayonets fixed, the 60th, and soon after, at a gallop, every man of the 11th. It was useless. There was, of course, no foe, so the troops returned, more infuriated than ever. But the mob was wild too; it had tasted blood, and was thirsting for more slaughter. Forming on the moor in strength, the rioters marched firmly into the town, straight down upon the soldiers' quarters. The specials were ordered to the front uselessly, and quickly ordered back again. Yet, in the short interval, stones had been thrown, one or two shots fired, the Riot Act read, the yard gates thrown open, and the 60th formed across the street, with the hussars behind them. Then a volley was fired over the heads of the mob, as they continued to approach, and the specials ran in. Next came the voice of the colonel—'Now, my men, fire! Fire *low* this time!' And they did. The report at the time and place was that he said, 'Aim at the heart; spare neither man, woman, nor child!' It is not likely he would so far forget himself.

That volley, however, was enough. The mob wavered, turned, and ran, leaving some of their number to crawl out of the way of the infuriated hussars, as the infantry opened, and the charging horsemen urged through and

dashed amongst the mixed multitude. Many threw themselves flatly down, when the horses, more merciful than their riders, leapt over them, whilst the hussars cut furiously at them with their sabres. They followed the flying people for miles, and returned revenged. Many a tale of wounded men lying out in barns and under hedges was told, but the Plug Rioting was at an end.

How brave uneducated humanity *can* be, learn from the short story of an unknown hero. 'Bill the banker,' he was called; other name at inquest and funeral was not forthcoming. He was only a poor navvy, his usual post at top of a forming embankment, amongst the 'tip' waggons. At present—it was during the making of the 'Sowerby Contract,' on the Manchester and Leeds Railway—he was 'top-man' over one of the shafts of one of the numerous tunnels being constructed on that line. He met with a gloriously disastrous accident, and his conduct should be emblazoned in letters of gold in the history of his country. He was only a navvy, I say, and probably could neither read nor write. Most likely he had swallowed many quarts of ale after pay-day on the previous Saturday; very likely he had taken part in more than one free fight, to the scandal of Sabbatarians. The shaft at which he was top-man was perhaps 200 feet deep, solid rock, sides and bottom. His duty was to raise the trucks filled below, and run them to the tip, returning them empty to his mates at bottom. Now when a chain broke away, or a big boulder fell off a truck, Bill had to shout, 'Waur out!' and the miners below crept farther

into their 'drives,' allowing the death-dealing article to come down harmlessly. One unhappy day, my top-man's foot slipped hopelessly, and he knew that he must be smashed from side to side of the narrow shaft, and landed, a crushed mass, at the bottom. But his mates? If he screamed, the unusual noise would bring them *out* at once to inquire the cause. He never lost presence of mind. Clearly went down the signal, 'Waur out below!' and his mates heard the thud, thud, smash, of his mangled remains in safety.

At the time of which I speak, this railway was open for a few miles only from Manchester. The manager was a certain small, irascible captain, R.N. A queer fish he was, fresh caught from the ocean, and with the most voluble command of strange oaths I ever heard. Possibly this same facility suggested his special capacity for his new appointment. He might, perhaps, have had others. Well, this violent little naval officer and gentleman issued a pamphlet of instructions to the men, a portion of which was devoted to 'Engine-Drivers.' Thrilling stories of the result of want of caution abounded; the best I remember, and quote its climax verbatim. In those early days, wherever the character of the country favoured it, the lines of rail were laid upon square bedded blocks of stone. Very soon wood sleepers were universally substituted, the discomfort and wear and tear from the stone road being very great; but *then* they were in use. Now the captain's story went that some careless platelayers, in shifting rails, etc., had left one of these blocks of stone in dangerous proximity to the line of rails. Mark the advantage of

the cautious driver! He *saw* the great block, and knew the danger, so 'he put his engine *as much as possible on to the* OTHER *rail, and just missed the stone, otherwise he must have hit it!*'

For a long period my most intimate friend was George Robert Stephenson. But as that time is now twenty-five to thirty years ago, as our acquaintance has been entirely in abeyance for all that period, I having been at the Antipodes, and as he succeeded years ago, by inheritance, to all the wealth and position of his uncle and cousin, I will not write of him now with the familiarity I should once have done. I see that he is (1876) the President of the Association of Civil Engineers, and I suppose that he continues to some degree in the practice of his profession. Well, for some four years we were more intimate than, perhaps, either of us have ever been with another. When I joined the Manchester office, George Robert Stephenson was there learning the practical duty of a draughtsman. Presently he was removed to Halifax, to study the out-of-door mysteries of his profession upon the Manchester and Leeds Railway, then being constructed, a line of unusually heavy and varied work at that time.

One night, or morning rather, for it was two o'clock, on entering my rooms, I found our office messenger, a Cockney thoroughbred, asleep on the sofa. He had a note for me from Mr. Thomas Longridge Gooch. Now Mr. Tomkins was a person of considerable self-esteem. It was therefore difficult to surprise those who knew him with his actions, yet he did surprise

me with this note, for it was just a letter of instruction to proceed to Rochdale by the six o'clock train next (that) morning, and thence on to Halifax by coach, there to take up my abode. I had four hours to settle things and pack up. I called my landlady, who cried and packed up for me, and I got away. Four years later, I occupied the same rooms for some months, but my landlady had lost her pet youth, and the young and, I fear, worldly man who occupied his place failed to rouse the same interest in her broad, motherly bosom.

The coach from Rochdale was indeed a 'caution.' The driver, as report went, had not been sober for thirty years, and was the best whip on all the roads around. I enjoyed the exciting satisfaction of sitting on the box by his side. How we *could* avoid that sprawling team and cart, or that toll-gate, was an agitating speculation, especially as we travelled at full gallop. But he always got past, escaping by half an inch or so, and never, it was said, had an accident. Oh, yes; one he had in crossing Blackstone Edge, that terror to travellers. In dashing over the rough, rocky road, the coach jolted an 'outside front' off the seat and on to the road. This passenger was found sitting on a stone an hour or two later, 'waiting for the coach,' he said. Our Jehu died suddenly, on descending from his box one day whilst I was at Halifax, full of liquor if not of years.

Arrived at Halifax, I joined George Robert, and thenceforth we lived three out of the next four years together, remaining a long time in a very small village

sole companions. Does he now remember our hey-day of youth, I wonder, as well as I do? Save for kind remembrances brought me by J. H—— a few months ago, I do not know. Nor do I know how far a staid success of mature years would affect his retrospect of his doings of so long ago. I will say then only, that looking back through all these years, I think he inherited much of the quaint humour of his uncle, and many of his uncle's proclivities too. He was thoroughly in earnest in his doings, and worked well and hard; he was a rapid draughtsman, and *liked* the work. His soul, however, was in mechanics. Give him a lathe, brasses, tools, etc., and he would never tire of the workshop *in petto*. Boating he was especially fond of. We had a small boat of a couple of tons or so at Searle's for a while, at the latter period of our close acquaintance. I hear that he afterwards improved upon this, and that he is now an expert yachtsman.

One instance of his humour, which he exhibited when in very high spirits, he will not object to having told. He would stop suddenly in passing an ancient dame, and, raising his hat, say with imperturbable gravity, 'Pray, madam, have you seen a little brass dog with a black and white collar pass by here?' His manner always ensured the sympathy of the old lady. Well, I could say much, for old memories throng upon me, but will refrain. He has had an exceptionally prosperous life, I am told; may it hold with him to the end.

Something I must now say of 'Old George, the Father of Railways.' He was not so *very* old either at this time, say about sixty, but held the name to distinguish him

from son and nephews, who had been long out in the engineering world. At the time of which I speak, George Stephenson no longer attended much to the supervision of progressing railways, confining himself chiefly to his private affairs, his foundry and coal mines, and to attendance at 'the House' during the inquiries in Committee respecting the numerous projects, chiefly railway, in which he was interested. Sometimes, however, he took a run over the ever-increasing lengths of railways which had been constructed, and which were still under the control of himself or his son Robert. On one of these occasions I took an unpardonable 'rise' out of 'the old gentleman,' which he bore without malice, *like* a gentleman.

A train of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway was just leaving the Wakefield station for Manchester, when I swung myself up on the footboard on the off side, and opening a first-class carriage door, entered and sat down. One other passenger only was in the carriage. Lo, the great George himself! It was three years since he had seen me, and then only for a short time during the early 'article' period. He had forgotten my face utterly. So much was evident at once, for he favoured me with frequent and clearly suspicious glances. That was the time when the question of locked doors was being first agitated, and one argument in favour of locking them was that by doing so such frauds might be prevented as that which I, in 'the Father's' opinion, was evidently committing.

The spirit of fun possessed me. I traced exactly the course of his thoughts, and pretending equal igno-

rance of him, never introduced myself, as I ought to have done, but sat with unnatural demureness, glancing from time to time furtively at him and then out of the window, until slackening speed announced another station, when I jumped up and retired into the farthest corner of the carriage, where I remained until the train started again. 'Huddersfield Junction,'—'Brighouse,'—'Elland,'—'Halifax Junction!' Now had I worked up the great George to fever-heat—to a wrathful certainty, in fact, that I was an impostor. On slackening for 'Sowerby,' my destination, I hastily opened the door—the *off* door, as before—and made a rush—a pretended one—out.

A hand—*two* hands on my coat tails—and a gruff voice, 'No, you don't, you young rascal! Hi! here, porter! station-master! take this young scamp in charge; he's trying to cheat us.' 'Well, sir,' says the station-master,—'well, sir, I don't know who *you* are, with your "cheating *us*," but *this* young gentleman is Mr. ——, and has charge of the,' etc. The hold of the great man who was 'so obstinate' relaxed, and he looked at me bewildered. 'Yes, sir,' say I, 'I am sufficiently hurt that you should give one of your own pupils in charge as a swindler, but you need hardly have torn a new coat off my back.' 'Old George' first stared, then turned turkey red, looked savage too; but at last, as I stepped out of the carriage, he fairly laughed aloud as all did, and he shouted, 'You young villain, I see it all! Confound your impudence; I'll be even with you, sir, yet.' I touched my hat, and said simply, 'Thank you, sir; my tailor is Mr. Stubbs, St. Ann's Square, Man-

chester.' He shook his fist, but I could see he was amused.

Next time George Robert went to his uncle's, he sent me an invitation to Tapton by request of the 'Father;' but I could not go, as I was working night and day to get my branch ready for Government inspection at some early day, already advertised as the opening one for traffic. Mr. Stephenson fully appreciated the situation, but all the same I lost the opportunity of seeing something of the home life of a great man and those around him.

But I have remedied that loss very effectually for others, as will be seen by my next chapter. Four years later, as well as often subsequently, I met Mr. Stephenson at the offices of his son and their partners, at 134 Great George Street, Westminster, where I was working with his nephew. He had by no means forgotten me. When my name was mentioned, he shook hands kindly, and slapping me on the back, said to Mr. Bidder, 'This is the rascal who sold me at Sowerby Bridge.' I dined that day with those gentlemen and others at the Westminster Coffee-house.

CHAPTER V.

GEORGE STEPHENSON.

Memories of Tapton House, by one who lived there.

I HAVE now to introduce the memories of an old friend respecting the private life of George Stephenson, arranged by me from his notes. This is the sole occasion wherein I have told anything other than my *own* experiences. The gentleman was for some years private secretary to Mr. George Stephenson, and he had means of studying his character open to no other. He will be recognised still by some under the initials of 'J. H.'

'My father, a retired or furloughed Indian officer, proposed to article me, his unworthy son, to the Messrs. Stephenson, father and son, in the year of grace 1837—long enough ago, of all conscience! The Messrs. Stephenson were the Pioneer Railway Civil Engineers, and not only in that, but in many collateral respects the greatest engineers of their day. Mr. George Stephenson, however, strongly recommended me to go to Mr. George Parker Bidder, as by being a pupil of that gentleman, who was a partner of the Stephensons,

I should have equal facilities of seeing all the works going on, and the superior advantage of advice and attention from Mr. Bidder, then a rising man, who would be sure to help me on my way, which Mr. Stephenson could not undertake to do personally. So I was articled to the sometime "calculating boy," and was his only pupil, for he never took another. As I have said, Mr. Bidder was at that time, and continued to be until their deaths, principal manager and partner of the Messrs. Stephenson's firm. That I should be that gentleman's sole pupil was, of course, highly advantageous to me, because I had the undivided attention of Mr. Bidder, and the private friendship of the Messrs. Stephenson also.

'A few words to the recollection of my good old friend, George Parker Bidder, himself a celebrity, before I enter upon the more immediate subject of your inquiry. He should have a better biographer than myself, and will have, too, I doubt not, when the time—far distant, I hope—comes. George Bidder was at that time but thirty-one years old; yet, by his wonderful arithmetical talent and his unconquerable determination, he had already "achieved greatness," having secured a world-wide reputation.

'In his very early life there appeared before the public a young boy, possessing extraordinary powers of mental arithmetic. Without assistance he solved instantaneously questions so complicated as to bewilder the minds of accomplished professors, supplied with ample provision of pens and paper and books of reference. The newspapers of that day recorded constant instances

of his power; and seances were held by scholars and gentlemen to test it. George Bidder always came successfully through these examinations, so that at twelve years old "the calculating boy" was widely known.[1]

'From first to last my work with Mr. Bidder was necessarily that of the Stephensons (indeed, he had no other), in whose offices, and upon one or other of whose numerous works, I was habitually engaged, as were other pupils of the firm, for there were still other partners in this or that work undertaken by the Messrs. Stephenson. Our London offices were at that time at 35 Great George Street, Westminster. Many men—since celebrated in our and, indeed, other professions—were trained there, and at No. 134 in the same street, to which we shortly removed.

'I remember now the Messrs. Stephenson, father and son; George Parker Bidder; George Robert Stephenson, now President of the Institution of Civil Engineers; Thomas Longridge Gooch and his brother Sir Daniel Gooch; James and George Berkeley, the latter the first C.E. sent out to India; George Graham, who went with him as chief assistant and died there; Mr. J. B. Pitcairn, son of Sir James Pitcairn, of Cork, who left us and became a clergyman of the English Church; Henry Austin, our chief draughtsman, with whom I lived for years, who married Charles Dickens' sister

[1] Mr. Bidder has himself told me (the author), that whilst he believed that at that period no possible arithmetical question would have been long unanswered by him, yet he had little if any notion of the *manner* in which he achieved his conclusions. In later life, his brain, full of more important matter, lost much of this strange power, although he retained enough of it to puzzle and confuse the wisest mathematical heads among us.

Letitia; Chiffins and his brother, afterwards the well-known engineering surveyors of Southampton Buildings; Charley Rannell, who died in India; and many another, whose names alone I have space to give, as Young, Gale, Grundy, Dempsey, Courtney, Sydney Rishton, Lawrence, etc.

'Our office was removed to 134 Great George Street about the year 1841 or 1842, just when the railway mania was beginning; and then the name of Stephenson became more widely famous than ever, whilst the wild schemes we were called upon to approve, the impossible work we were expected to do, grew and multiplied together. But I progress too rapidly.

'Indulge my vanity by recording the one fact that my first work in purely civil engineering was the supervising the construction of the viaduct over the Regent's Canal, Blackwall Railway, where my initials still adorn the key-stone; that my first mechanical engineering experience was a daily trip upon the "Harvey Combe," the first six-wheeled engine—Stephenson's great success—where my duty was to keep account of work performed, fuel consumed, speed attained, etc. Did I not nearly come to grief, though, with that engine? We pulled up on the top of an incline, and I took the driver and stoker for a drink to an adjacent house. As we went we heard a noise; and looking round, lo! there was the "Harvey Combe" starting on a downward journey by herself! A frantic rush, a moment's dead heat, and the stoker climbed up by the tender, and all was well.

'Month after month passed, until a year had fled, and

I heard nothing of the Stephensons; but at last, in 1840, I was ordered to Tapton House, the residence of George Stephenson. It happened thus. The old gentleman had but lately had his portrait taken by an artist of celebrity. A younger brother of Mr. Bidder, who had shown considerable talent, had made a copy of this picture for Mr. Stephenson, the original being for some public hall or other. This valuable copy was entrusted to my care to take to the Euston Square Station, where I was to meet Mr. Stephenson, who would be on his return journey to Tapton. We met, but the picture did not attend the meeting. It was unaccountably absent: So far my first meeting with the illustrious "Father" was certainly a failure. However, I then learnt that I was to leave London. The fiat of "all the" Stephensons had issued, and I must away.

'We went that same day to Derby, on the North Midland line; thence to Chesterfield, where the line was not then opened. Here Stephenson sent me off to the principal inn to order dinner and beds, whilst he remained at the station about some business. I was in great fear and trembling lest I should make another serious mistake, for I knew well by reputation that old George liked a good dinner and good wine as well as any one, often saying that good work required good feeding. He was willing to pay for it, but would have it. I need have been in no apprehension.

'I had but to mention his name, and the landlord bowed obsequiously, the landlady bustled, the waiter dashed hither and thither, bearing about much glass of various colours, curiously tortured serviettes, and

so on. Every one knew what Mr. Stephenson liked, and I ordered it all. Presently he arrived, to find a capital dinner ready, its only fault being that it would have sufficed for twenty hungry *gourmets*. He congratulated me upon my catering, suggesting a sarcastic compliment or two upon the quantity provided, but showed himself well satisfied, nevertheless; and he enjoyed his meal and half bottle of good sherry, I am sure. A choice little dessert followed, with a bottle of old port. He was always particular about his wines, of which he kept a choice though small cellar at Tapton, and they studied his tastes at this Derby inn. So we had another bottle, which I appreciated highly; and when the second was finished, he told me that, all things considered, I "should do." I have since had reason to believe that this second bottle was a deep ruse of his, to see how I carried my wine, the power of doing which pleasantly was by no means unimportant thirty-five years ago. I was coming down, as I discovered subsequently, to act as his secretary and amanuensis, by arrangement with Mr. Bidder.

'During the evening, Mr. Robert Stephenson came in. He had arrived, also on his way to Tapton, by a later train than ours. There was something very attractive about Robert Stephenson—a geniality of address, looks, and manner which made him always a favourite, and I was as much attracted by him as others. Of course I was very young,—a lad, almost,—and the familiar equality with which those two really great men treated me was an almost oppressive pleasure to me then. Robert took only coffee that night, but he smoked

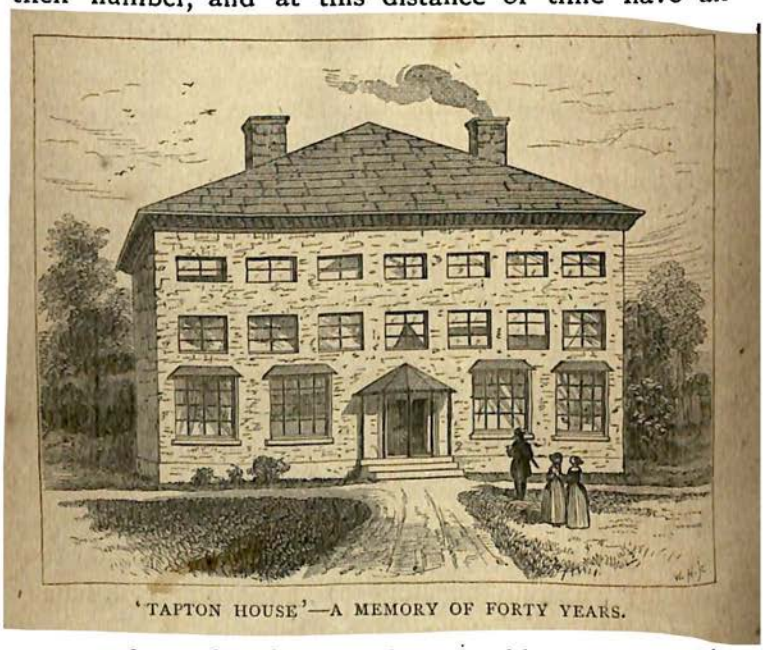
cigar after cigar, shall I say furiously? He was then in the very prime of his lifetime—thirty-six years of age.

'We travelled post next day, and arrived at Tapton House in the afternoon. On our arrival I was presented to an elderly Northumbrian lady, who met us in the hall—comely and plump, and dressed in pea-green silk. This was Mr. Stephenson's second wife, not Robert's mother. She was older than her husband. I was also duly introduced to a niece of this lady's, who afterwards married into the family. There were also two nephews of the old gentleman's employed about his numerous works, but neither of them achieved any eminence, and both are now dead. It was only after the lapse of a day or two that I became aware of the arrangement relative to my long stay at Tapton.

'I was at first treated as a visitor only. I wish I could say more than I am enabled to do of my personal acquaintance with Mr. Robert, whom I liked so much, and whose memory I hold in such esteem; but he lived his life away from Tapton,—in London and elsewhere,—and came but seldom into Derbyshire, though when he did come, he was always genial, pleasant, and smoking. He died on the 12th of October 1859, before completing his fifty-sixth year, and is buried in Westminster Abbey. His works live after him. His father had ten years more of life granted to him, being born in 1783, and dying in 1848, at the age of sixty-five. George Stephenson is buried in Chesterfield. Nearly all the great wealth of these two has descended to George Robert, son of a brother

of George's named Robert, therefore the nephew and cousin respectively of the two celebrated Stephensons.

'The residence of George Stephenson was Tapton House. Tapton was a great, square, red-brick building, only remarkable for the number of its windows. I have often counted them, but could never recollect their number, and at this distance of time have an



'TAPTON HOUSE'—A MEMORY OF FORTY YEARS.

obscure fancy that they were innumerable; that, steadily as I might count them, a stray one would suddenly crop out unexpectedly, to the confusion of all calculation. Tapton stood (stands, I suppose) upon a steep rise about a mile northward from the Chesterfield station of the Midland Railway. The town is half a mile farther off than the station. A fine expansive view of

the line, the town, and the stretch of country around was obtained from the house. Chesterfield itself has nearly retired from my fading memory, save only its remarkable "crumpled" spire.

'The gardens were very extensive and excellently kept. They faced the south, and every advantage which skill could command was taken of their favourable aspect and position. Old George's one belief, save in steam, coal, and iron, was in these gardens of his. Here he never calculated expense. He was proud of them, and justly so. Never did he appear to so great advantage, I used to think, as when exhibiting his horticultural favourites to visitors. Latterly, perhaps, he became a little prolonged in his harangues upon his early doings, his battles in Parliament, his later successes, and his coal mine and safety lamps. All visitors are not mechanical geniuses or admirers of the underground, but all could sympathize with his pride in boasted prize-taking for rare tropical products, his splendid pine-apples, grapes, peaches, and hot-house fruits, his earnest statements of his various appliances to save labour or improve results. He delighted to tell how his friend, the great Mr. Paxton, the Duke of Devonshire's gardener, had approved this system, and adopted that.

'Respecting his peaches, the old gentleman had a crotchet which seemed to my uninitiated eyes singularly curious. With a trough of some compound of chemical unpleasantness, he *fed* the leaves of his wall-fruit. The walls were all glazed, and had verandah-like roofs overhanging them some two feet, and glazed also. Placing his "hell broth" in its trough on the floor, the fumes

would rise up to the overhanging roof, to be collected there, and returned condensed, like a constant dew-drip, upon the leaves and branches. Upon what principle he adopted this plan, or what success attended it, I know not, but it seemed to me wildly extravagant. Nevertheless, Sir Joseph Paxton saw it, and, I suppose, approved of it, so there might be "something in it."

'Tender-hearted and humane was George Stephenson, and, of course, very fond of animals. Equally of course, animals were very fond of him. He had a few brood mares, of which he was very careful, and they would follow him about as he went on his rounds of inspection. His most curious fancy about the time of my advent was to have about his place a lot of Welsh sheep. After doing immense mischief, they proved perfect nuisances, and were killed off as rapidly as possible. Splendid are those venison-like saddles and haunches of small Welsh mutton, only a few pounds in weight. But, reader, if you had feasted upon a compulsory series of fat, tasteless joints of these sometimes spare and gamy animals, fat with the fatness only to be achieved by these sparsely-fed and far-travelling creatures when fattened upon rich pasture lands where the "best of victuals" are obtained without trouble, you might perchance in time come to think that you had had enough of those haunches.

'But, fat or lean, these sheep had a contempt for fences, and would top the highest with thoroughbred ease. Then George hit upon the ingenious dodge of coupling them. The success was complete as regards the fences, but the sheep were generally found strangled, balancing

one another on either side of the fence. Then, as I have said, we ate them *ad nauseam.*

'Two other favourites, much petted by Mr. Stephenson, were his dogs. "Carlo," a very pretty and well-bred spaniel, came first in his affections, for he was proud of him as well as fond. Carlo had been given to him by a fair and noble lady, the scion of some great house where he had been an honoured guest, and he liked to talk of it. Carlo brought trouble upon him, nevertheless. He had his vices, prominent amongst them being an unholy joy in much chasing of wild rabbits, which brought down warm remonstrances from neighbours. But the old man would not listen to them, and stood by Carlo manfully, declaring that he would neither dispose of him nor chain him up. How the quarrel ended I know not. Mind you, George Stephenson had determination *very* largely developed, and with it combativeness; and I believe at heart he rejoiced at any opportunity in his day of success which recalled the memory of his frequent fights with and victories over scepticism, prejudice, and idleness.

'There was a nameless, half-bred, rough terrier which for some years always accompanied Old George everywhere, above or under ground, as the case might be. He was growing old, like his master; but he could not persuade himself of the fact, and persisted in continuing the tricks of his youth, one on which he much prided himself being always to wait until the lowering process commenced, on the occasion of underground trips, when he would leap lightly into the descending cage. His lightness left him, however, and one day he missed his

footing, and with departing yelp fell headlong for hundreds of feet.

'In his early career it was impossible but that George Stephenson, marked among his workmates by his superior intelligence, and conspicuous for determination and combativeness, should have had many a dispute, some of which "the ring" alone could settle. He used to relate some of his pugilistic encounters with great delight, as though a single combat had been a real treat to him; as, indeed, it doubtless was. His eyes would brighten, his hands clench, as he "fought his battles o'er again."

'The particular encounter of which he most would "babble," was fought in the cause of humanity. When a "pitman," he was unable to bear any longer in silence certain tortures inflicted by way of sport upon some unoffending animal. The chief offender was a pugilist of some local note, who took up the cudgels on being interfered with. Old George, who was young George then, accepted the man's challenge to fight, and they stripped to it. "They said I was beat," said he excitedly, "but I never knew it myself, and just as I was feeling faintish like, Bully Bill gave in. I didn't mean to be beat, and I was just as obstinate then as I was when old Lord —— abused me for it. But I wasn't just myself either for a week or two. Bully Bill was a good 'un;" and then Old George would continue to relate how he had "almost" thoughts of going into the "profession;" nay, for the moment he "almost" persuaded himself, and quite persuaded *me*, that the "ring" had lost a bright ornament in him. All this he told me more than

once, the best account of the affair being given after the excitement of witnessing a sharp but short fight at the pit mouth which was in progress when we came up. That impromptu prize-fight which he had won in the service of kindness, was as dear a memory to him as any of his later triumphs.

'He had one particular dress, which he never varied—a broad long-tailed coat of mottled green, black velvet waistcoat, pepper-and-salt trousers, cloth buttoned boots, and a white necktie, pinned with a large common brass pin in a way of his own. In winter he added a long dark overcoat, in the button-hole of which he always stuck his left thumb. A colossal statue of Stephenson stands in the Euston Square Station, so life-like, that I, after twenty years' absence, stood before it lost in abstraction, until my fixed gaze and dropping tears attracted the attention of the bystanders. The dress and attitude are precisely what I have described.

'"Old George" was entirely a self-made man, and of absolute necessity a vain one. Still his vanity was eccentric, and took no small turns. He did not even boast his person or his purse, though often his successes in the "battle of life." As for "peacock" finery, as he called it—dress and decoration—he hated it. He hated foppery of every kind. Kept closely down through the necessity of his circumstances in his own early days, he had a blind hatred to that display in the youth of my day which was denied to him in his. I had been forewarned of this, and presented myself to him simply dressed, and with no other ornament than a small Geneva watch, of which I was very proud; and as it

might be supposed to be useful, I fancied it would pass muster. He despised it, however, as will presently be seen.

'For himself he would wear *no* ornament—watch-chain, breast-pin, or ring. To such an extent did he carry this whim, that when presented with a neat diamond breast-pin by the wife of Mr. Fitzgerald, a coal-mine owner to whom he had shown the way to fortune, he would not wear it, and stuck by his old brass friend. Some one once at our table wounded his vanity sadly by calling him a "lucky" man—which he certainly was. He began hastily and angrily to contest the point, when, his good sense overcoming his anger, he stopped suddenly, and presently remarked quietly that many had said the same, and he supposed it was true, as no man could succeed without it; for, said he, "Man may deserve but can't command success; only give me some credit for the hard work and obstinacy which have together made me what I am." Recurring to this when our visitors were gone, he told me quite coolly that I could never succeed as he had done, for I had "too small a chin." Well, I have *not* succeeded—as he did, at any rate.

'For a considerable time I was, I may say, always with Mr. Stephenson. I was his trusted secretary at home and abroad. I accompanied him in all his travellings, save, sometimes, those runs of a few miles and half a day to the coal pits. I always detested underground work, and he, in his kindness, often left me at Tapton during these visits.

'Some odd, indeed embarrassing circumstances would

arise at times during our travellings, for "Old George" was apt to be terse in his language when in earnest, and would call a spade a spade—a custom not always understood by strangers. Sometimes he came off but second best. For instance, he put two of us to the blush and irritated a third of the four who were passengers in a first-class carriage—a gentleman, a young lady,—unacquainted these two,—Old George, and myself. He was seated opposite the lady, a fine, tall, handsome girl, of a very perfect physique, and evidently a *lady*. He eyed this girl admiringly and critically for some time, and then rapped out this: "You'd make the mother of a grand breed of navvies, my lass!"

'Of course she was most indignant, changed her seat to the other end of the carriage, and sat gazing out of the window, her face like a peony. I was overwhelmed, but he took all stoically. Certainly he meant no offence, and was probably talking more to himself than to her, as gentlemen of sixty-five will. The strange gentleman, however, rebuked him, told him he was no gentleman (used even a stronger word), and said that it was the most marked and uncalled-for insult he had ever heard.

'"Sir," said the old man with dignity, "I am George Stephenson"—an observation which in no way altered the stranger's view of the matter; for, instead of succumbing under the revelation, he only said, "Well, George Stephenson, you are no gentleman." After this the solemn silence of insulted English reigned supreme. It was very hard, but partly at least deserved.

'Generally, however, wherever we went, the sight of

Mr. Stephenson produced bustle and attention. At the "Mosley," Manchester, and the "Adelphi," Liverpool—in fact, at the best inns everywhere, he was an honoured guest. The best rooms, wines, dinners, beds, were all at his disposal. He was a man of mark to his fellow-men, but he was a mine of money to hotel-keepers.

'The hotel he frequented was the house of the profession—no small advantage in the mania days. With him came chairmen, directors, lawyers, and engineers numberless; after them a swarm of lesser fry, liberal of expenditure, and frequent employers of chaises, horses, and carriages. These brought strange instruments with them, and, like the wild officers of that crack regiment of Grant's, "never went to bed." They brought a following also of *men*, good for much consumption of bar liquors. Thus one George Stephenson meant scores of pleasant entries into the house and the ledgers. It would have been a cross, indeed, to drive George Stephenson to a rival hostelry. He knew it, too, and took moderate advantage of his position, exacting wisely strict attention to his own comforts.

'When away, wherever we were, invitations to take up our quarters at this or that country house or town mansion came always. George Stephenson never accepted any of them—another instance of his clear-headed, practical wisdom. The town's best inn was always our home; but we dined out often when we had the time. He on all such occasions kindly put me forward, encouraging me to talk, to reply to questions put to him. "How was it, John? tell Mr. ——." I overdid it at least once. At York we were very frequent visitors

at the house of George Hudson, the "Railway King," for the Stephensons had much business with him at the time. As usual, we always occupied our rooms at the inn. My first dinner at Hudson's was sadly disastrous. I remember it well. The day was Sunday, "dark and dreary," and we were to make a long day of it. Hudson, who was the lord mayor, wanted to take Old George to the cathedral, but the latter quietly transferred that honour to me. I was simply overwhelmed by Hudson's gorgeous apparel, and by his pronounced air of "bounce." Mr. Stryver must have been his prototype. Stryver, says Charles Dickens, was "stout, loud, red, bluff," was "free from any drawback of delicacy," and "had a way of *shouldering* himself morally and physically into society." Hudson annoyed me still more by his pompous inattention during service, his bold staring to and fro, his loud remarks condescendingly addressed to me. But dinner-time came, and if ostentation could make a dinner good, *this* was indeed a good one. Ten of us sat down, and we had five liveried attendants, giants in white powder and gloves, as well as a butler. Old George sat it out until midnight, enjoying every good thing. When he left I remained still, by Hudson's special request. I found out why presently, for about half an hour later he broached his subject. He wanted my opinion of the future prospects of Indian corn. I had exactly the same knowledge of Indian corn as it had of me. But my father was extensively engaged that year in the trade, or speculation rather, although I hardly even knew it. George Hudson *did*, however; hence his

special attention to me throughout the day, for he held a large quantity of corn himself.

'I was, however, after six hours of champagne, sherry, claret, port, and tobacco, quite up to and a little over the mark. Rising, I fear, unsteadily from my chair, I patted him violently on the back, saying oracularly, "Hudson, old boy, keep it, keep it!" We clasped hands silently, and returned to our potations. I have a dream of Hudson in the embraces of two giants being carried to bed. At all events, I found myself alone, and condescended to be piloted to mine inn by another of the giants. Once inside, I made for bed; but my room was gone, I could find no trace of it anywhere. Then I remembered confusedly the grief to which Mr. Pickwick came, and I dared not try any strange doors. I stood uncertain, all still, and morning advancing, driving my hand through my hair disconsolately, when to my great joy I saw just before me two very old friends, a pair of unmistakeable cloth buttoned boots. I started forward in my joy to knock at that door; but it played me false, opening suddenly, and displayed me prostrate before my astonished "governor." He rose and led me to my room in silence. All he ever said to me was, that he thought that when he left a gentleman's table, it was time for *me* to do so likewise. For all that, his manner was reprimand enough. Hudson kept his maize long after I had recovered from mine, and made a large sum of money by a rise in that cereal.

'I could repeat myself in anecdote, but, my object being to show the *homely* side of the character of one whose public career is well known, I have said enough,

and I will now recall something of our life nearer home. When not abroad, Mr. Stephenson devoted at least two days a week to his especial hobby, Clay Cross Colliery, and to visiting some twenty limekilns which he possessed at a place called Crick, both within easy distance of Tapton. That I succeeded in obtaining his friendship and attachment has always been a satisfaction to me. This he proved by an offer to keep me altogether at Tapton, and to give me certain great contingent advantages, if I would devote myself to the collieries altogether. But it was not to be. I always had and have still a great dislike to underground work, and, with my little experience of the world's difficulties, I declined the offer. So afterwards he would often go off alone on these single-day excursions, away long before I was up, leaving me to the discussion of a numerous correspondence, and to the shooting of rooks for dinner; for rook pie was a favourite dish of his, and there was a rookery on his estate. When he remained at home, my duty was to open his many letters and read their contents to him aloud. He never made any comment at the time, and I had usually to proceed to the answering of previous ones when the reading of the day was done. But during the afternoon, or perhaps not until the next morning, he would enter his office,—he totally ignored the words "study" or "library," which his admiring wife desired to thrust upon him, as being, in her simple thought, more suitable to the dignity of "her George,"—and taking his letters *seriatim* as they had been read to him, he would unhesitatingly dictate suitable replies, terse, pithy, and pointed. Many of his letters contained

stinging castigations, for he always spoke his mind. It is a marked proof of his superior mind, that, whilst quite without what is called education, he was unusually fluent and appropriate in dictation. Indeed, I was liable to attacks of his letter-writing *furor* at all times. Often has he called me out of bed in the night, to take down replies of which he has been thinking while lying awake. He seemed, too, to be well up upon general subjects, although I never saw him open a book during our whole acquaintance.

'George Stephenson, notwithstanding outside roughness, and the vanity born of success, was always nervous and often quite bashful about himself. He had conceived a strong desire that his Autobiography should be written by me from his dictation, and he hinted at it several times, but never pressed it; whilst I, foolishly young, did not take up the idea with the warmth it deserved. Would that I had done so! But I was afraid of the task and its probable length, nay, I was beginning to pine for congenial society—youth and fun, and the excitements and changes incidental to my age and profession; for, indeed, it *was* dull at Tapton sometimes, notwithstanding the unvarying kindness I received. Our visitors were almost all men of standing in some branch of our profession, men of twice my years and thrice my gravity; and my after-dinner sympathies *would* steal away from the discussion of stone, "muck," or iron, to lighter subjects. I remember amongst our visitors many men then and afterwards celebrated, as Professor Barlow, and his son of the "Barlow" rail; Joseph, soon to be Sir Joseph Paxton, of Crystal Palace cele-

brity; Mr. Gill, the chairman, and Captain Laws, managing director, of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway; Thomas Longridge Gooch, its engineer; Mr. Swanwick, a former pupil, and since hydraulic engineer to one of the London waterworks; the Duke of Devonshire (once), a thin, dark-complexioned gentleman, with a large nose; George Bidder (once); Captain Cook, of electric telegraph note; George Hudson, the *then* great railway king, with many others. But there were not any young ladies save one, and never a fresh youth to "lark" with.

'In his confidential conversations with me he exhibited sometimes a sore point, none being so sore a one as that of the "safety lamp," of which he claimed the invention to be his own solely. He told a graphic story of his descending into a foul pit with an ordinary lamp protected by wire casing, when no other person would venture, and returning safely. This lamp was, he always declared, his own sole invention, and the clumsy original of the "Davy." He showed me the silver cup presented to him by the owners of the colliery where this was done—a cup filled with a thousand guineas when given to him. I filled it with claret, and obsequiously drank to the discoverer of the "safety lamp," George Stephenson. Although this question will now never be set at rest, the above is strong evidence, surely. That he had great mechanical ability cannot be doubted. He evidenced it to me in a most marked manner. I have mentioned a small Geneva watch which I possessed. He despised it until it went wrong, then his sympathies (with the mechanism, not with me!) were roused, and he undertook to set it right. I trembled to leave the tender thing to

his mercy, but he had it, of course, and soon put it in thorough order. He shortened the hair-spring, and made other repairs, as though he had been bred to the trade. He had very strong arms, and large supple hands. With these I found that he performed the most delicate operations. He told me, on returning my watch, that such fine work had always been a hobby of his. He ridiculed the distinction between civil and mechanical engineering, saying that an engineer should know how to build a bridge, divert a river, make a needle or a Naysmith's hammer. His old habits clung to him always. He was obstinate even in memory. He never showed the same pleasure in anticipating a great meeting to celebrate some success or inaugurate another, although he knew how to behave with dignity when exchanging courtesies with the great ones of the land, as he did when preparing for a start to that ever happy ground, the Clay Cross Colliery, especially if he had an idea of a new piece of machinery or something of that sort in his mind.

'A few words about one who is *not* so "famous in story" —his kind, good, second wife, the lady whom I knew. No one has written her biography. She had no sons to become famous. Let me, then, record how homely, good, and kind she was. On our return from any of our travellings, there she was, be it hot or cold, wet or dry, morning, noon, or night. George Stephenson never lacked a reception from his good wife. The old Northumbrian lady made it a rule to be waiting for him, to meet him in the hall. Quietly the northern burr rolled pleasantly through the pleasant greetings of each as

they "Betty'd" and "George'd" one another. Like all childless ladies who are left much alone, Mrs. Stephenson fell back upon a world of animal pets. She had kittens, lap-dogs, canaries, parrots, etc. The only home circumstance which ever seemed to ruffle George's temper was the noise of two grey African parrots, who kept up a constant stream of disjointed conversation with each other. One of them, however, took to impertinence, and would break off all other occupation at sight of him, to scream at him, "*Coom* Betty!" "Coom Betty!" until he was almost afraid to say it himself. At other times it would startle Mrs. Stephenson with the call when her husband was far away. This kind, pleasant old lady died first. Her husband, indeed, married a third time, but of his third wife I only know that she survived him.

'My time at Tapton ran out. I had foolishly declined the colliery scheme, nor desired longer to continue Mr. Stephenson's secretary, so that I was free to return to the varied duties of my profession. I left Tapton House bearing with me the good wishes, I think, of all, and myself full of a lasting affection for that good couple. Although I had a pressing general invitation, and was specially invited too, yet circumstances so happened that I never went again to Tapton, nor ever again saw Mrs. Stephenson; and although the "old man" continued kind and friendly as ever, the close connection was severed.

'My future intimacy with "the Father of Railways" was confined to his visits to London, where I was soon re-established in the old house in Great George Street.

There he often called upon me, especially about daybreak. This was not always quite agreeable to me, for I might not have gone to bed exactly so soon as he had, but it became an almost daily habit with him when in town. Having got me up, he would send me for penny rolls or buns, and off we went to feed the ducks in St. James' Park. This he enjoyed thoroughly.

'But a later visit, when he could spend an afternoon at the Zoological Gardens, with supplies of nuts and gingerbread, made a laughing child of him. How I, aged nineteen or twenty, used to wonder at the delight of this old gentleman of sixty or more! He was, like most really great men, a simple-minded, kind-hearted man by nature. He stayed occasionally at "Rhodes'" near Westminster Bridge, but had a private residence, which he preferred. However, he would often give me a good dinner at Rhodes'. The place and neighbourhood I knew have vanished now, to "clear the way" for improvements; but I longed, when in London thirty years later, for the old haunts, and cursed the improvements in my heart, I fear. I suppose I am getting old too!

'I have mentioned his dislike of all foppery, and I was always careful not to offend in that particular when in his presence; but of all times and places where I felt it safe to indulge my natural propensity for dress, the most safe I thought to be the fashionable West at fashionable hours. There, however, he once put me to the greatest shame. One afternoon I was "doing" Regent Street, with a couple of especial swells from Great George Street, one on either side. We were dressed,

I suppose, somewhat alike; and this was the costume of the period: patent leather boots, the smallest wherein we could "crowd" our feet; white or very light-coloured trousers, cut over and under the boot to its very tip, and strapped under it with a broad strap of the same material (this was, as the tailors have it, a "really elegant trouser" when well made, and had for swells the extreme advantage that it was expensive, and could hardly be worn twice without washing). For the dress of the time, see Dickens' "Lord Frederick Verisopht," and "Sir Mulberry Hawk,"—say that picture where Nicholas waits in the tavern and Verisopht is adjusting his collar at the glass. A tightly-buttoned coat, or fine cloth blue surtout, with roll collar; delicately white wrist-bands turned back some six inches over the coat—another cleanly and expensive style; just a line of white waistcoat, with perhaps a soft pink shade under it; black satin scarf, with double diamond breast-pins connected by a few links of Trichinopoly chain; gloves of some light colour, fitting as perfectly as can be managed; a very shiny silk hat—then almost a novelty—and a short cane made up the attire of the young gentleman of that day! Thus we sauntered on, ogling languidly the fair sex, and expressing our want of ideas in silence, when lo! to the dismay of all, but especially to my horror, approached us George Stephenson. He seemed about as much surprised as *we* did. We could not "cut" the old gentleman, and could not disappear underground! He *would* not (how we wished he would!) cut us. I say "us," but he singled out "me unhappy," and taking me gently by the button, held me, whilst my

faithless friends pushed on at a speed altogether inconsistent with their late languor. There we stood, he examining me very slowly from top to toe, from toe to top, turning me slowly round the while, showing me off to the passers-by—appealing to them, as it were, as to the meaning of such an unexpected appearance! At last he released me, smiling a compound smile of sarcasm, pity, and amusement. He still continued to gaze at me, however! We had a small crowd round us now. Anywhere but in Regent Street at a fashionable hour, it would have been a large one. Probably the people thought me one of the swell mob, or a prodigal son, and waited expectantly.

'Presently, with his strongest Northumbrian accent, put on intentionally, I suppose, he rolled out: "J—— H——, you lived —— years at my house, but I never knew I was harbouring an American Jackadam!"—some local northern phrase, I suppose, indicative of contempt, which, thank goodness, neither the crowd nor myself could understand.

'As he slowly moved away after this outburst, the crowd moved away also, and I was left to recover my presence of mind as I best might. Certainly never before or since have I felt so particularly small as then.

'"Old George" never referred to this incident, and although I was, of course, very savage at first, I soon forgave the author of my ordeal, but I had a bitter quarrel with my companions in the billiard-room in the evening.

'Time progressed, however, and the almanac marked 1843. I was married, and my experiences in Old

England approached their end. I had determined to try Australia, and after a few weeks in London, chiefly passed with George Robert Stephenson and some of his friends, I sailed.

'Thus closed my acquaintance with George and Robert Stephenson, for both had long been dead when next I trod Old England's shores. The world would be a better place to live in if there were more George Stephensons in it.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE RAILWAY MANIA.

A Dangerous Practice—Railway Cowards—An Awkward Meeting—New Experiences—Maidstone—First Symptoms of the Railway Mania—An 'Opening Day' and its Incidents—The Mania at its Height—Demand for Civil Engineers—The Pressure of Work—The Rush for the 30th of November—The Railway Trespassers—A Scene in an Engineer's Office during the Mania—Leigh Hunt and his Family.

THE practice of getting upon or off carriages in motion was a very common one in those days. Eight or ten miles an hour was nothing to us. Right hand on the door-handle—right foot on the foot-board—the left foot swinging freely, ready to be firmly planted on the ground—a steady look ahead for a clear foot-hold free from rolling ballast, and down you go, leaving your hold of the carriage, and running hard parallel to the train, but gradually forging diagonally away from it as the impetus received from the train dies away, and you slacken speed!

I have gone down a thirty-feet embankment in three steps diagonally, hurried by the uncontrollable impetus due to the train's speed. No doubt this practice was dangerous, but it was very convenient. A poor, tired

mortal, returning in the evening from a twenty miles' walk over an unfinished railway, might well think little of a small risk, which saved him those last four or five miles of toil. But that it *was* dangerous my own experience will prove, for I approached very closely to death's door twice by means of it.

Tired with a long day's field work, I took daily advantage of an evening returning ballast train, which could slacken speed, but could not stop, some half-dozen miles from Manchester, my destination. As usual, this train on the night in question overtook me as I plodded along the line; as usual also, the driver slackened speed, and, as usual, I ran to mount the engine; but for the first time my hand and eye were not in accord, or a loose stone upset me, and I was in a moment dragging with my feet an inch or two in front of the great driving-wheel, hopeless of any other fate than that of being instantly crushed by the iron monster. But suddenly, two strong pairs of arms seized my relaxing hand, and held me where I was, giving way not an inch. My arm felt as though dragged out of its socket, but the wheel did not yet devour me. How long the train was in stopping! Somehow, at last, the guard at the rear of the train thought there was something wrong, and plied his brake. Then we stopped, and I was pulled up to the engine, where a fit of trembling seized me.

I was three days in bed after that, and dreamt of revolving monsters for years, but I was not cured of mounting trains in progress. My other experience will be recorded presently.

People had not as yet become accustomed to railway

travelling, and very many were afraid of it still. Thousands pinned their faith to the dangerously attractive mail-coach, with its four spanking thoroughbreds, and dreaded the infinitely more rapid, more safe, more comfortable express, with a senseless terror, which refused to be appeased by 'statistics;' but I suppose the race of railway cowards has died out now. In my time it was a numerous one, and one of the oddest incidents of my life occurred through it.

Normanton, on the Midland, was then by no means the great station of to-day, but it was a centre, and many iron ways converged there. It received a large accession of traffic upon the opening of the Manchester and Leeds Railway, which joined the Midland there, but ran its own trains into Leeds on the Midland rails. The first station after leaving Normanton for Manchester was Wakefield.

At the time of my story I was upon an engine which had just run into Wakefield with a train going south, and we—the driver, stoker, and myself—were all leaning over the handrail, watching for the signal to start again, which signal seemed long in coming. We were already a few minutes late, when we witnessed the following scene.

A middle-aged lady stood 'trembling on the brink,' and was evidently afraid to enter the train. She looked on as her various belongings were bundled into the gaping luggage-van, and was then conducted to a first-class carriage, where an obsequious porter stood with open door. The station-master said, 'Will you please get in?' but she got not in.

Then up bustled the guard. 'Now, ma'am, time's more than up; take your seat, please.'

But still she shrank away. The engine whistled a shrill impatient scream; the lady started back.

'Well, ma'am,' said the guard, 'we can't stop all day;' and holding his hand up as a signal, off started the train. Then did the lady beg that her luggage might be restored to her; but the pace quickened. My last glimpse of her was as she was yet upon the platform, gesticulating with a parasol. I never knew whether she and her luggage met again, but I *might* have known.

Five or six years afterwards, I was going to London from Yorkshire, and the only other passenger in the compartment was a lady. We approached with loud whistle the 'Box Tunnel.'

The lady started nervously, and wondered whether there was any danger. We dashed into darkness as I assured her that tunnels were perhaps the safest places upon a line, as extra precautions were always taken in them. I quoted a few statistics of the comparative risks by coach or rail, ridiculed the exaggerated fears of some people, and then proceeded to relate, as 'perhaps the most ridiculous instance' I had known, the funny scene at Wakefield.

We emerged from the Box Tunnel; a curious smile, not benevolent, sat on that lady's face. Surely I had succeeded admirably in reassuring her, for she seemed rather cross than alarmed. We slackened up to the next station, then she said: '*I*'—an immense *I*—'was that lady, sir.'

I took another carriage, and lost the story of the Wakefield luggage. Would nothing suit fate but that, out of the thirty millions of Britishers, that woman must crop out upon me again?

My first 'set' of Yorkshire experiences was now completed. I resigned my pet railway to Mr. Hawkshaw, after going over it with him. I had spent three or four eventful years in the county, those years during which boyhood or hobbledehoyhood becomes manhood. I had grown my growth, nursed my whiskers, loved my calf loves, and was of age.

I had a short rest then, but idleness wearies one who has been accustomed to constant occupation. Late hours and billiards soon tired me, so that I was glad to receive an appointment from G. R. Stephenson to rejoin him in the south, Maidstone being my first destination.

Now was the period begun, known universally as 'the Mania Time.' The demand for railway communication was far ahead of the supply of civil engineers. Increased facility of communication was beginning to be appreciated, and every mile of line constructed led to clamorous demands for a dozen more. The result was that we were overworked to an astounding extent.

The London and Birmingham, the Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, the Manchester and Leeds, the Midland, the Great Western, and the Eastern Counties were at work, and, what with branches, loops, and alternatives, would in themselves have given work to all the staff of engineers then extant in England.

Not a small tribute to 'Old George' was this network of but twelve years' birth, with its baby thirty

miles between Liverpool and Manchester, four-wheeled engines, and 40-lb. rails.

But many another line was in progress. Scotland, Ireland, and the south of England had 'buckled to.' As yet there were none but legitimate undertakings, which had been well considered from the beginning, and in which time, skill, and attention had been given to every detail. Even with this limitation, there was enough for every one connected with our profession to do. Only when illegitimate speculation began to increase,—when the stock markets went mad,—when a few hundred shares in a railway from anywhere to anywhere else (or nowhere) were worth a fortune, and all the world rushed at railway speculation as though it had run a-muck,—when rival lines were being pushed forward into Committee with a rapidity which rendered it impossible that they should have been well considered, —when rival promoters met in the committee-rooms of the House, and fought sometimes in its lobbies, did our time of hardship as well as overwork come.

However, I have got on a little too fast, for I must say something about Maidstone. What a pretty, sleepy place it was when *I* knew it! I cannot remember ever feeling cold at Maidstone. Perhaps a residence of years on the Yorkshire mountains may account for that. We worked hard at Maidstone. I had come down a few days before the opening of the Eastern Counties branch from Paddock Wood to my new headquarters, and there was plenty to do. The day came, and G. R. Stephenson and myself met a train of important personages from London at the junction, and triumphantly

escorted them to Maidstone, where a great dinner was eaten, and many speeches made.

Now I never cared for great dinners. They are always cold, to begin with, unless for those dozen swells who monopolize the very top of the best table. For those, also, are reserved the best wines and waiters; for them, too, the turtle soup comes really hot, and they can ensure a second helping if they please; they have *sauce* with the turbot, and truffles with their turkey, whilst their ice pudding is cold.

Our Maidstone dinner is over, the guests are going or have gone, and we have to take the London 'swell mob' back. I am full of orders and work, and not until the latest moment have I time to rush into the cloak-room for my hat. Only one hat is there, and it is a 'world' too small! I cram it down upon my head, and run to the train.

We are away, with our complement of whist-players, singers, and snorers. On the engine we look out into the night anxiously—an opening day is always an anxious time to those in charge. My hat hurts my head, and I swear at it. We reach the junction, and then run merrily on to London, feeling safe upon the *old* line.

'Returning home in triumph,' we pick up a train consisting of a lot of luggage vans and second-class carriages, and hook on ahead to help the struggling engine. This is the train of station-masters, porters, etc., with their wives, children, and household gods, being taken to their future locations along the new line, which is to be open for traffic to-morrow. So we stop

here and there to leave a carriage or two. The train is a heavy one, but gets lighter at every stoppage, and we speed along merrily now, 'until,' as Grimaldi has it, 'we come to a white-washed cottage, where lives an old woman in her dotage,'—the watch-house for a level crossing, in sober prose. There we suddenly run the whole train off the line. It appears that the contractor had here laid down a pair of 'points,' leading from the main line into a long siding, where his waggons were nightly taken. He had stationed an old man in the cottage, whose duty it was to open the gates for passing road traffic. To-night this old man came on for a further duty, and this was to turn off the points after letting in his waggons, so as to leave the main line clear. This had been heretofore unnecessary, the waggons and their engine having had the road to themselves; but henceforth the waggons were rather interlopers, and must be carefully shut out, excepting at permitted times.

Unfortunately, this had been a day of extra working to all, and the old man had simply left things in the old fashion,—that is, with points open, and leading straight into the siding. Many things must always be left to the last, and those waggons and their engine had been doing extra tides all day. Had many a complacent guest known how nearly we crossed that engine in running down from London in the morning, he might not have sat so peacefully smiling an after-dinner smile in the evening.

On came our train, G. R. Stephenson and I on the leading engine, at some twenty-five to thirty miles an hour. Suddenly we feel that odd jerk which every one

who has been blessed by an escape from a railway accident knows, we heave heavily to the right, lurch wildly to the left, round the sharp and broken curve of 'temporary rails,' and then run straight into a row of forty or fifty waggons. G. R. Stephenson and the driver are standing on the engine, and lie down flat before the fire-box door. The stoker is somewhere on the tender; I am sitting on the little seat which hooks upon the railings. Crash! I pitch heavily forward headlong, receiving, as I drive through the air, a smart scratch from something travelling the opposite way. I am flung head foremost against the fire-box door, which is fortunately shut. Crash! The second engine comes upon us, and the train demolishes itself against itself, the carriages telescoping as usual, though I did not see them.

I open my eyes lazily. Surely I have been asleep! What a row! what a hissing! An awfully uncomfortable bed this! I am dropping off into insensibility again, when something under me moves. 'Let me up,' I hear in the driver's voice.

Good God, we've had an accident! I remember—on Johnson's siding! I leap up, and both my bed-fellows rise slowly. But I can see nothing, and feel stifled. What is it? The hat! Driven over my eyes and nose by the shock, it has probably saved my life, and before I can see anything, it has to be cut off.

We three pulled ourselves together, and finding there was no danger of fire, released the steam by knocking up the valves, and then we went to the rear. Luckily the remaining passengers had been in the last carriage

or two, and were unhurt — beyond the shock, of course.

But where is the stoker? We find him at last, insensible, between tender and engine, jammed by the ankle. We were long in getting him released; he went to the infirmary, and had his foot amputated, and I think he died from the operation. The line was cleared as soon as possible, and the affair was never reported in the papers. Stephenson and I left the pile of ruin, and walked into Maidstone uninjured; but I had to keep my bed for several days ere I recovered from the shock. The scrape upon my forehead was from some waggon beam, which I escaped so nearly. *That* is my chief memory of Maidstone.

Then the 'hurly-burly' came to us, and 134 Great George Street became the quarters of almost all the Stephenson staff, whence we were dispersed by the various heads of that great house anywhere, everywhere, throughout England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales; hurrying to our destination by fastest means, whether flying train, twelve-miles-an-hour mail-coach, or chaise and pair, when 'Horses on!' was the cry day and night if need be, till chaise and sleepy occupants rattled to the door of the chief hotel of central city, or red-curtained public-house of remote hamlet.

Sleepy we might be, but we were not to sleep. Arrived at our destination, we must hurry out to work, and be in the field from daylight till dark, making up the field book after a frugal dinner, until ten, eleven, or twelve at night. Next morning out again, and so on, Sundays included.

Field work done, hurry-scurry back to town, to work double time again at plans, sections, estimates, and what not, till all was finished. Then off again elsewhere, to race with time as before. September began it; October increased it; November piled the agony, until, as the fateful 30th of that month approached, there was no longer any rest at all. We worked day and night—literally, *all* day and *all* night. As it will be unnecessary to recur to this curious time again, I may as well describe now circumstances not strictly confined to any one year, but such as have impressed themselves the most upon my memory as representative of those three eventful years during which the mania raged.

The world was simply mad. New prospectuses for railways to cost millions of money each, appeared daily. Town papers published extra sheets to accommodate railway proposals; country papers, however remote, teemed with them, although chiefly recording schemes dealing with their own district only.

The struggle to obtain the services of competent engineers, that is, those who knew *anything* about engineering, was marvellous; for the manufacture of civil engineers was expensive, and the process slow compared with the demand. Nor had the usual run of 'parents and guardians' a few years earlier anticipated that a civil engineer would soon be a small god worth his weight in gold.

Our offices were, of course, besieged by despairing promoters, offering almost *any* terms if we would only undertake their lines. After undertaking, under pressure, the conduct of some half a dozen more than was

commonly prudent, scores must have been declined. Cost was forgotten by promoters in that mad race. I at twenty-one was offered twenty pounds a mile to do section work, and I could have done five miles a day in daylight. Of course I could not be spared at any price. But we were nobly paid too. Six guineas per day of *eight* hours I received, and often I worked the whole twenty-four. We had, besides, double pay on Sunday. We might, of course, have jibbed at any time—a few did; but *esprit de corps* held us well enough together.

All this was not the worst of it, however. If your Locks, Stephensons, Vignolles, Brunels, etc., were paid fortunes, they did their best for their employers, and knew how to do it. But men who had never seen a railway, save indeed a passing train,—schoolmasters who could not make a living, clerks who knew a book of Euclid, clergymen even who had perhaps taken a B.A., all became heaven-born civil engineers! I have met men at that time out in the field, entrusted with the getting up of a great work, who could not 'set' their level! I met one who wanted to know what a gradient was; nay, a very nice fellow, down from the Government offices in place of Colonel Pasley, on one occasion did not know what a sleeper was! The result necessarily following was disastrous. After thousands upon thousands of pounds had been thrown away, the work of such men was frequently found to be absolutely useless, so that the money and twelve months' time was lost. The mere loss of money was little regarded, but the loss of time usually

meant ruin, for some of the opposing schemes would 'get through' meanwhile and become law, when the others would probably be put out of the field for ever.

The pace was sadly overtaxing, morally and physically, and when at last the longed-for 1st December brought rest, it brought it to minds and limbs literally worn out.

I could tell sad stories of the after effects, including insanity and death, but I must give one or two more common scenes of the progress of events before the 30th November. At that time, any body of people proposing to form a railway had to give due notice of their intention to every town, parish, and county through which they proposed to pass. Then they must prepare what purported, at least, to be accurate plans, sections, and references of their route. Copies of these were lastly to be deposited at the recognised public office of every one of these towns, etc., in order that those interested might have the opportunity of examining the scheme, and of deciding how to act concerning it, that they might have time, ere Parliament met, to come to some conclusion. All these documents were to be deposited in the provided places on or before the 30th November of the current year. If this was not done, the promoters lost a year, as it could not then be done until the next 30th November. Hence all the helter-skelter as the fatal day approached.

After the 30th November, the work for us was very much easier. It was now impossible to alter, 'for better or worse,' our own scheme. There it was, to be pecked at by the public at will. But if we could not remedy

anything in our own plans, we could take copies of those of our opponents, and make an inventory of *their* lapses. It was easy work, and would have been pleasant but for our fears for ourselves. A plentiful crop of errors was always to be discovered, and it is *so* pleasant to find fault with one's opponents!

Next — a good long next, whilst perhaps we were lazily beginning our field operations for another season—came the bringing up of the various 'private' bills before the House of Commons, and the appointment of committees of that House to examine into the merits of opposing schemes. These were the lawyers' hard times, when they had to move heaven and earth in the interest of their particular schemes. Our duty then was slow enough, — wandering daily about the lobbies; dashing off madly in hansoms for an absentee or a forgotten document; hunting up witnesses—friends from the country, who had never seen London before, mayhap, and who might be at Richmond or Rosherville, or any of a thousand other places, but who were certainly not at home.

Sometimes we had, of course, to give our own evidence, but that with youngsters was chiefly confined to asserting the accuracy of field work, sections, and calculations—a most trying assertion, in the face of twenty protests of *in*accuracy. The higher duties of why and wherefore we were there at all were undertaken mostly by older heads.

It was easy, idle work, beginning at twelve and ending at four, thus throwing us upon our own resources, with every inclination, means, and appliances to boot,

to work as hard at dissipation, with our full pockets and recovered physique, as we had previously done at our profession. If we 'got through,' our line, requiring so many hundred thousand pounds and so much time, became an established fact.

Many amusing as well as some tragic circumstances accompanied these times of mania. As I have said, our rough work began with September, and culminated on the 30th November. In September it was hard, but healthy, and a regular night's rest might be expected, if but a short one. Perhaps this lasted through a good part of October too. The field work was often unfinished late in that month, but in such case sleep became scarce, for the work must be plotted as well as taken and made up. So bedtime was put back until 3 or 4 A.M., and occasionally we got none at all. Nay, I have known a fresh line taken up after the beginning of November itself, and then good-bye to bed for weeks at a stretch! Sleep thus became, indeed, a luxury. I have driven eight or ten miles, and been waiting on the ground for daylight sufficient to enable me to commence work. I have kept to that work at the hardest until it was too dark to see; nay, I have gone on by torchlight. I have then been driven back to my inn, taking an hour of jolting sleep in the trap, have sat up all night 'plotting,' and been on the work again at daylight; and this for three days and nights without break, excepting the naps on the road—say, a short broken five hours in all. For three weeks at a time I have never gone to bed before three, and never remained there after seven; five nights of that

time I have not been in bed at all. It was cold work, that out-door November levelling. Moving, say, four miles from 8.30 A.M. to 4.30 P.M., your numb hands fingering metal screws, your sleepy eyes staring monotonously through a telescope at an upright piece of wood with figures on it all day, you could not avoid a feeling of intense weariness.

To mend matters, we were actually outside the pale of justice whilst doing this work. Until our Act was obtained we had no status, so we were forced to break a law first in order to obtain a law afterwards. Some were actually committed as rogues and vagabonds, and sentenced to fine or imprisonment. Most of us escaped that extreme indignity, chiefly owing to the good feeling of landlords, who knew we were gentlemen merely doing our duty, and who, perhaps, had sons or nephews of their own similarly engaged elsewhere. But we all had to risk dogs and keepers, to get into this nobleman's park or that gentleman's estate by some ruse or other, —often by night with lanterns, sometimes by means of an imaginary summons of the proprietor to distant duty, and, when the cat was away, by 'tipping' the mice.

I was once thoroughly taken in. It was on the south side of the Thames, a few miles below London, and I was taking levels for the North Kent scheme. I had to pass through some gentleman's property who opposed the plan. I had been warned off and watched several days, and had to go on with other portions of my work, trusting to 'tie' them somehow or other through his estate.

One day word came that this gentleman was gone

to London. We were out on his ground by daylight, and hurrying against time, getting on rapidly, when there walked out from a near shelter three or four keepers, one of whom lifted up my instrument. The others took staffs and chain from the unwilling hands of my men,—who had been warned never to make active resistance,—and walked off, first touching a hat to me, and saying that Mr. —— wished to see me '*to breakfast.*'

The mere doing of this lost me my morning's work, for I had been far too hurried to go out of my way to make 'bench marks.' I accepted the invitation, for there was no alternative. There sat the gentleman at breakfast. It was his turn for a ruse, he said. He was quite pleasant in his reception of me, chuckling over his little dodge, and pressing me to eat. 'Must be hungry—up so early to get work done—ha, ha!' He told his people to look after my men, and concluded by informing me that he intended to commit us all for trespass, though I am sure he never meant to do so.

We talked and ate, and he kept us all day, not giving up the instruments till evening. I hardly know how or why it ended as it did. I think we found mutual friends; anyhow, he gave orders that I should not be further molested, as he would fight his battle elsewhere. His house was always open to me for my few years in London after that.

But, hard times as those were, they were ease and health themselves compared to those last weeks in London. No sleep; hot fires; close rooms; cold draughts; strong tea all day and night on tap; the cold shudder of

exhaustion creeping down one's back all the time; no exercise save the monotonous 'pricking off' or plotting, with an occasional walk round your drawing-board to reach your work the better; the stupid silence or still more stupid joke, at which all giggle inanely; the gradual drooping of a head, as the pen falls from listless fingers, and the head bumps on the drawing-board, make up a scene the full miseries of which can hardly be conceived. One such amongst many stands out in my memory very vividly.

It is breaking dawn of Friday the 29th November, about 1846 or 1847. Our many wax candles are paling slowly before the sluggish light of a London morning. We are bitterly cold—cold with the coldness of exhaustion, and of the coldest hour of the twenty-four. Fires burn, but do not warm us, and our frames are every way at their feeblest. Some one enters to replenish the already overloaded grate, where, notwithstanding every attention, dust and ashes seem just now predominant. Walking to the fire, I turn my back to it and look round. I see a large, lofty room, built for the purposes of a dancing school, lodge room, or some such thing. It is very long, with six windows on either side. Under each window are a high stool and drawing-board; on each drawing-board several wax lights.

At the first of these boards on my left sits the resident engineer to be, if the line passes. In the meantime he is the nominal head of the anticipated railway. But he has resigned his trust temporarily, and his immediate work is the plotting of a portion of the line levelled during yesterday. His head rests at this moment upon

his folded arms; his arms rest upon his drawing-board; his books and papers lie side by side upon the floor, the paper crumpled, the book back uppermost and open; one candle at his desk is guttering out, another has gone out long ago. He snores—and no wonder!

At the next board sits a little man, of bilious temperament evidently. He is hard at work finishing some lithographs of plans and sections, to which the last touches have been put in pencil, to be printed out by him. This man's brain was twisted in some curious manner by over-work and under-sleep. He was a conscientious, determined fellow, and worked on diligently spoiling his plans. He has before him just now, say, twenty sheets, upon each of which he has to print, perhaps three times on the average, 'level crossing.' He is just finishing the last of these sheets, and we find afterwards that at each and every place he has written 'church.' What the association of ideas was, neither he nor we ever knew. He did not know that he had made a mistake at all.

The man from the third desk is marching up and down the room, disturbedly muttering; he is half asleep, and trying to arouse himself by movement. The two next are at the one work of comparing references, and, seated together, have stuck to it all night, although just now they are refreshing tired nature with strong black coffee. The last man, who should be at the last board, is stretched before the further fire fast asleep, evidently by set purpose. He has the best of it. But just now I start at a rapid seven-miles-an-hour from my position before my fire, and bear down upon this sleeper, pulling

up with a kick or two over him. Yes, I fell asleep standing there, and instinct bore me off to save my gravity! This eccentricity altered the conditions, and I never saw exactly what the other five were at.

It is light now, and a bath and a breakfast set me up miserably for the day. That other day passed and brought behind it the 30th, long looked for; but we were not ready, and Sunday being a *dies non*, George Bidder, who was head engineer, determined to try on a small scheme, which was neither more nor less than to include the *dies non*, deposit on Sunday night, and plead 'no day.' Now George Bidder was one of the pleasantest fellows going, as also one of the shrewdest, but he blundered on this occasion. Certainly we were all utterly unwilling to stand another night of it, but, more certainly, we should do our best. However, Bidder knew the additional strain it must be, and ordered the best dinner for four o'clock on Sunday afternoon that the —— Hotel could furnish.

The hours passed somehow, and the dinner-time came. Bidder looked in to see us all right, and went away. Three of us were working together in an off room comparing some work, consisting chiefly of such very small figures that each had a magnifying glass by his side. We had agreed that we had need to be very careful, our condition being scarcely equal to carrying stimulants at all. The dinner was set for twenty, and was a good and expensive one, to which sat down nineteen as exhausted-looking mortals as the Sebastopol trenches could have subsequently furnished. We had, in all, eleven bottles of wine, chiefly light wine, and

much of it was left; but not one really sober man left that table. My quantum was two glasses of champagne and two of port after dinner. My colleagues had about the same, yet even we, upon trying to begin work again, could find no figures, and exhausted the time in boisterous laughter. Meanwhile the scenes enacted in the long room surpass belief. Yet not one of us had meant to exceed, nor, indeed, had any exceeded under ordinary circumstances.

When Bidder, or his representative, made his appearance to see how things were getting on, they had got on so far that it was useless to push them farther, and the sponge went up for that year. Bidder behaved like a true gentleman. So far as I know, he never mentioned this circumstance, and never reproached any one, unless it might perchance have been himself.

Usually, when the wild midnight scamper in carriages-and-four, spring carts, or any other available conveyance, was over, and midnight had struck, our work had ended, either successfully or in failure. Then came the reaction. Some were temporarily mad, going on doing night-work upon plans and sections unceasingly. Some were physically exhausted beyond the power of thought, requiring weeks to recover; and one or two did not recover at all. For myself, reaction was wonderfully rapid. On my worst occasion I lost a day.

All was settled; it was one o'clock A.M., December 1st, and I took a stiff glass of hot whisky-and-water to keep off thought, and went to bed at 'mine inn.' We all gave orders that we were not to be roused. I did not remember even getting into bed. When I awakened,

it was eight o'clock in the morning by my watch, and I wondered at my recovered tone—I was not tired at all. So I went down to breakfast and found that it was 'to-morrow morning!' I had slept thirty-two hours without awaking! The waiter had looked after me, wound up my watch, and so on. The faculty have occasionally told me that this is impossible. I only know that I did it. I walked twenty miles homewards that day.

I will close my memories of the 'mania' by mentioning an error or two discovered in opposition plans by myself or those immediately with me. In one set of plans a whole county was omitted. In one set of sections there was a jump of just one hundred feet totally unaccounted for.

I went back to Yorkshire again, in a position of far greater responsibility than before—that of resident engineer to some thirty-five miles of railway, of which I set out the first curve and cut the first sod, and upon which I travelled on the first engine. It was then that I resumed my intimacy, as before stated, with Patrick Branwell Brontë.

The following years were good to me. I was twenty-three, had command of three horses, the run of the best inns in Yorkshire, and the friendship of the best set of fellows it has been any one's lucky fate to know. All this was backed by a good income—too good, indeed. I kept my chambers in Gray's Inn, and had many a trip to London—always on business, but not for business only always. Stay; once I went on pleasure only, and gave £7, 7s. a night for three or four nights

to hear Jenny Lind sing; and I do not regret it, much as I may want riches now.

Then and afterwards I made many valuable, or *in*-valuable, acquaintances in the world of art and letters. Leigh Hunt, most of his family, and many of his friends and relatives, were among these: a remarkable family they were indeed. Leigh Hunt, the gentle poet and stern reformer, he who passed imprisoned a year of triumph,—nominally on account of his political writings, really because he had dubbed the 'first gentleman in Europe' a 'fat Adonis of fifty,'—was now sixty-six years old. It was at the time of his portrait being taken—that one with the long white hair and tall white collars, the frontispiece which adorns his later works, *Kensington and Beaumont and Fletcher*. Slim, and perfectly upright; his handsome, pale, oval face almost without a wrinkle; his long white locks falling to his shoulders, over those immense shirt collars, which, had they been but starched, would have ended his days long before by cutting his throat. He was a perfect picture of sensitive refinement. I see him striding backwards and forwards up and down his 'old Court suburb' study, his dressing-gown, although 'tis evening, flying out behind him, dictating his flowing periods (it was *Beaumont and Fletcher* then) to his too willing factotum, amanuensis, friend, son, and servant, Vincent.

Poor Vincent! you doated upon your father, and surely you gave your life for him. But Leigh Hunt saw not the weary air, the haggard look, heard not the deadly cough, so absorbed was he in his occupation. And Vincent met his look brightly always,

showing more eagerness to go on than his father. Yes! Leigh Hunt did sometimes say, 'But you'll be getting tired, my boy,' only to be met by a ready, 'Oh no, Pa! let's go on.' And on they went. How do I know so much? I have seen and heard it often, for I had access at all times to the house where lived Leigh Hunt, his wife, and the two youngest children, all four dead long ago.

At other times, on other evenings, Leigh Hunt would be more sociable, although he always accepted and gave familiar companionship in a semi-royal sort of way. He liked, on these occasions, to sit in a large and very easy chair he had, wrapped in his dressing-gown, surrounded by attentive young ladies who adored him; one or more of them—I have seen two—gently smoothing his long locks in most irritating fashion to others sometimes, whilst all hung upon his flowing periods, sparkling with that graceful wit and airiness for which he was so famous. Often would he relate his memories of Williams, Shelley,—never but once did I hear him mention Lord Byron, and that was to me only,—Charles Lamb, and others, with pleasant voice and impressive manner.

But he was curiously eccentric even when in his best moods. He would take his exact number of constitutional strides backwards and forwards at exactly the same hour daily: so many made a mile, and not one more or less would he take or give; another turn would have been destruction. Yet in the throes of composition he forgot all about this, and paced back and forward sometimes unceasingly.

People who lead sedentary lives are no doubt often eccentric, especially at the age of sixty-six, but few are so remarkable in better things as to attract so much attention to their weaknesses. His most remarkable piece of oddity was in his eating, especially his suppers. He would 'take a fancy,' and indulge freely night after night in a thoroughly indigestible supper of anything which accident or circumstance might have suggested, from corned beef to Welsh rarebit or Scotch porridge, recommending it eagerly as the most wholesome of eatable things; then after a week or so of indulgence, he would have brought on a fit of indigestion, upon which he would abuse the innocent, if indigestible, cause of his illness, 'up hill and down dale.' When better he would adopt something else, with similar 'praise, blame, and result.'

The following interviews are given as nearly verbatim as I can remember them after this lapse of time. Call the time Wednesday evening at nine P.M. Scene, the drawing-room at Kensington; Leigh Hunt seated by himself at table; on table, white cloth and tray; on the tray, three eggs boiled hard, salt butter, pepper, and bread. To him enter myself. Leigh Hunt *loq.*: 'Ha, how are you? I am eating my supper, you see. Do you eat supper? If you do, take my advice, and have regularly every night, at nine o'clock precisely, three eggs boiled hard, with bread and butter. I have had them now every evening for five nights, and there is not, I assure you, anything more wholesome for supper. One sleeps so soundly, too,' etc.

Next scene, Friday, time and circumstances as before,

save that the condiment under present consideration is a Welsh rarebit, with mustard, etc. I enter. Hunt to me: 'Ha, how are you? Have you seen Vincent? I am just getting supper, you see. Do you ever eat supper? If you do, I pray you, *never* take boiled eggs; they are, without any exception, the most indigestible, nightmare-producing, etc. They have nearly killed me. No; the lightest and most palatable supper I have ever taken is a Welsh rarebit with some Scotch ale. This is the second day I have taken it, and I do assure you,' etc. On Monday next it would be liver and bacon, or what you will. His longest love in my time was his old love, dried fruit, bread, and water — his Italian memory.

Leigh Hunt's inability to appreciate the comparative value of monies was well known. It was real, not affected. I have seen it myself more than once. For that, his conversation, and his brilliant touch on the piano, was he best known socially.

I am a staunch admirer of Dickens, but I cannot waver in my belief that Leigh Hunt was the model of 'Horace Skimpole,' at least until that lightsome individual began to exhibit his darker shades. The similarity is too marked in more things than can be mentioned here. I know that Dickens denied this, and that there is nothing more to be said; but the very first time I read the very first number of *Bleak House*, which describes Skimpole, I said, 'There is Leigh Hunt!' Who does not know of the money uselessness, the splendid touch on the piano,—especially in little sparkling things, as, 'Come unto these yellow sands,' a great favourite of his,—

the hot-house peaches on the table, and the bailiffs outside?

As to the money, I think it is Mr. G. H. Lewes who told the story of Leigh Hunt being unable to pay a debt of three shillings and sixpence because he had but half-crowns and shillings in his possession. But I have a better story than that, at least as good a one, happening partly in my own hearing, and I can therefore vouch for its truth. During the greater part of Vincent's last illness he was staying with me, a little way out of town down the river, and his father came from time to time to see him.

One afternoon Leigh Hunt drove up to the door in a hansom. I met him at the door, where he was beaming benevolently at the cabman, who was beaming too. Says Leigh Hunt after the usual salutations, 'Fine fellow that!' I ask how, for neither man, cab, horse, nor harness seemed particularly 'fine.' 'Well,' says Leigh Hunt, 'I found him returning from Hammersmith, and he said as an empty he would take me for half fare' (the whole fare was about three shillings), 'so I told him to drive on. He drove nicely and steadily, and now when I asked him his fare, he left it to my honour. You know nothing could be fairer than that, so I said I was sorry to say that I had only two half-sovereigns in my pocket, would one of them do? I could give him that, and if not enough he could call at so-and-so, or I could borrow it from you. Oh, that would do, he said; he would not trouble you. He took it, thanked me, and was getting on to his cab when I stopped

him to say that I was pleased with him, and that I should be returning about nine to-night, when, if he liked, he might come for me and receive the same fare back. He said he would, but now he has driven away so suddenly as you opened the door that I hardly know what to think.'

Mrs. Leigh Hunt kept her room almost entirely in those her latter days. She had become very stout, and disliked any exertion. Banting would have helped her had she known of the system. Thornton Leigh Hunt, the eldest son, to whom, when four years old, Leigh Hunt wrote a sonnet, was, when I knew him, editing or sub-editing the *Spectator*, and agitating for the establishment of the *Leader*. He then lived at Hammersmith, at the large house in the Square. It had till lately been a ladies' boarding-school, and had in the basement a very large room, the dining or school room of old days. Here Thornton kept open house every Sunday evening, with unlimited bread-and-cheese and beer. Here he weekly collected much and varied talent. How time has altered it all! Thornton was small, thin, blackavised, wild-looking, with *retroussé* nose, decidedly ugly—decidedly insinuating, too, receiving more attention from the fair than was at all good for him. He had a wife and family of pretty children. Thornton was an advanced politician, a Chartist and an Owenite in opinion, a safe anchor for banished refugees, a very hard worker, and much beloved by his children. But the main peculiarity of this man, descended from such a father, with such brothers and surrounded by an atmosphere of brilliancy, was that he had no touch of wit or humour in

his composition. The only two jokes I ever heard him attempt were the two dreariest that I ever have heard. Here they are—choose the worst: 'Eh? you want to succeed? Go and buy some and suck it, then.' 'Why am I like that cab? Because we are both on the earth.'

Leigh Hunt's eldest daughter had just died of consumption when I knew them first. She had the reputation of having been a beauty, and was the wife of Mr. John Gliddon, whose sister was Thornton's wife.

I was much grieved to hear of the death of Mrs. Thornton Hunt recently. Mild, kind, gentle, good, let me say so much to her memory. My especial remembrance, among many of the dear lady, is of the ludicrous, however. I had been hastily summoned from my chambers to take Mrs. Thornton Hunt and another to the theatre, where G. H. Lewes had placed a box at their disposal to see a new piece of his. When we came out, the night was wild, though fine; half a gale was blowing. The Hammersmith omnibus was full. I was not allowed to take a cab—the ladies would walk! We walked and walked. The wind was very hard upon us, and our progress, at the close of an hour, but little; and now we could not get a cab. From fun of fighting with the gale, our mirth had long changed into a silent struggle. Wearied at last, Mrs. Thornton Hunt suddenly exclaimed, 'Oh dear, let us turn round and walk backwards,' by which she meant beating a retreat to some of her friends' hospitalities; but the absurdity of the idea, coupled with exhaustion and growing despair, so excited our risible sensibilities, that we stood there

laughing long ere we could turn and walk anywhere. A return cab relieved us then.

Then there was a son twice married, who appeared rarely at his father's or brother's homes: I saw him but seldom. Henry Leigh Hunt came next—handsome, careless, witty, good-natured Henry! Henry had a splendid tenor voice, the qualities of which he exhibited but seldom. Not so reserved was his fascinating little sister Julia, of whom presently; and the best of them all, poor Vincent!

I wonder if Vincent ever said no. His heart for his father's work never failed him, but he grew sick and ill, and when his cold attacked his chest obstinately, he came to stay with me at Peckham. Then inflammation set in, and he went patiently through the weary round of hot applications, poultices, etc. He got better and returned home. I saw him into an omnibus. The night was chilly, but he had no overcoat and would not take mine. There was a drizzling rain, and he rushed headlong to his fate, to oblige an omnibus cad. He travelled those three or four miles outside, giving up his place to a washerwoman, stronger than the horses that drew them, very likely. He arrived at home coughing and shivering. It was long before he had an opportunity of obliging any one again out of doors; and when, months later, he ventured out again, his doom had gone forth. Yet through all that last summer-time he worked with his father at *Beaumont and Fletcher*, without a word of complaint; nor was that all, for he resigned himself when work was over to the wayward moods of his pretty sister Julia, and allowed himself to be carried off to this

party or that theatre when bed only was his fitting place. This was while the summer lasted; towards autumn he came to stay with me again, and then he went home to die. Poor fellow, if ever there was a simple, pure-hearted soul, he was one!

Julia, with her sparkling black eyes and glorious soprano, must be mentioned now. She knew how to modulate that voice into such passion, tenderness, grief, or anger, as it is rarely in the power of even a consummate actress to do. Little in stature, her every action was easy and graceful. What a prima donna she would have made! She and Henry would sometimes, out of very wildness, dress like street singers, and, going to the fashionable quarters of London, sing favourite opera songs. Seldom had they long commenced before windows would be opened and loungers would listen to them. They would often be asked to come in, and were sometimes recognised. Julia had a good temper and an easy, rapid flow of wit. Altogether she was one of the most dangerous coquettes of her day. But her day is done, and night come. The extraordinary variety of character in the Leigh Hunt family was a common subject of wonder to their friends. In mind and appearance they were singularly dissimilar.

Amongst the distinguished visitors who frequented Thornton Hunt's house on his Sunday evenings, were George H. Lewes, actor, editor, and author. A sort of untamed lion he was in my day, sturdy, well set up, with a mop of curly, brown-coloured hair, worn long. He had a lion-like trick of shaking his mane — head, I mean — when the hair would fall

round his face, over his collar and shoulders. Then he would throw his head well back with a vigorous jerk, and show a row of strong white teeth in a well-formed mouth, a broad forehead, and well-developed intellectual organs. I can see him now, standing just so at the piano, rolling out some jolly song, with powerful voice and good enunciation. Then would come a love song, Julia accompanying him the while with easy grace, her eyes flashing from one to another of her brother's guests, especially transfixing the bewildered foreigners, whom she slaughtered wholesale. For myself, I liked George H. Lewes best as a *raconteur*. His stories were always amusing. He certainly accompanied them with boisterous laughter; but if that be a fault, the laughter was deserved, and came at the right time and place. Amongst his choicest anecdotes were many of Charles Mathews, then in the hey-day of fame and embarrassment. Lewes wrote several of Mathews' best pieces, amongst them the best, as I think, namely, *The Game of Speculation*, and a startling novelty of eight acts, which, however, did not 'go' well, being too long, although there was a real fountain, and a real man tossed into it during a grand stage quarrel. Lewes would tell how, having 'cornered' Mathews, and insisted upon having at least some of his money, owing to him for this or that comedy, the actor would keep him so amused, that after half an hour of convulsion, he would leave him oblivious of money, and with promises of an early dinner to concert some new subject. Lewes undertook higher work than this, too, into which it is not my present intention to inquire. In his lighter

writings he always cleaves, I think, to his old leaven, the stage.

And he is gone too (February 1879). My last night in a London theatre was passed with him and Albert Smith, the latter met accidentally. They both looked strong and healthy men, and both applauded heartily,—as indeed I have often noticed, to their honour, all men or women connected with any branch of 'the profession' do. But Albert Smith died early, and Lewes all too soon.

George Gliddon and his wife, familiarly known as Anne, gentle, quiet, lady-like artist! Poor things, they had waited twenty years or more, and she looked 'tired.' George Gliddon, explorer in Egypt, sometime British Consul in Alexandria, was now in London with his panorama, which Anne had done so much to help in—a handsome, six-foot, genial fellow. They had one bright boy of four years. I remember how patiently he would stand by her side at dinner, saying from time to time, 'Do you like it, mamma?' Always his wishes were supplied, poor lad. They went out to America subsequently, and I have heard that fate was hard upon them and the boy.

CHAPTER VII.

LAST DAYS IN ENGLAND.

Yorkshire again — Leeds and Bradford — A Terrible Experience — The Cholera—Another Narrow Escape—The Great Exhibition—Experiences of the Irish Famine — Good-bye to Yorkshire — Indecision —An Unexpected Offer—I say Farewell to England and sail for New South Wales—The Good Ship *Watergus*—The Voyage and the Voyagers—Sydney Harbour.

WITH the Yorkshire dialect I had become familiar, and could generally hold my own well enough, but sometimes there came a poser indeed. Riding with a couple of friends through the park-like grounds surrounding the hydropathic establishment at Ilkley, where Tennyson was then a patient, I remember a breathless small boy overtook us, gasping out repeatedly, 'Toppenny's lostitgurs.' We could make nothing of the statement. Down came one of us, and was in a moment trying the girths of all the saddles. No, all was right there. We were puzzled; but the fact was that we had passed through a gate, this urchin had held it open, some one had pitched him a copper, which he had failed to catch, and now his petition for another when translated took form thus: 'The halfpenny is lost in the grass.'

Ours was a fine, free life in those days,—almost always out all day walking or riding over the railways being constructed; eating every day luxuriously a contractor's luncheon of cold game, turkey, duck, or goose, and champagne,—a contractor's dinner of numerous courses,—all meeting to dine together on every Sunday at our various inns, lodgings, or houses. Of course it was overdone, and notwithstanding hard work and open air, sometimes a gastric fever or an inflammation of the stomach would seize a weaker brother, especially if he were a heavy smoker. But at other times there were plans, specifications, etc. to be prepared, and a week or two in Leeds was a pleasant change. We had many good friends in Bradford, ten miles away, and would often run down there to dinner or other attraction, returning by a luggage-train which started from Bradford to wend its weary way everywhere at the witching hour; getting knocked about here and there, until its dismembered components would find their way to the uttermost ends of the earth. I never looked King Death so fully in the face as from that night luggage-train.

We had on our staff an architect, who designed the stations, lodges, etc. This architect lived at Bradford, and being a hospitable man, we dined with him frequently, returning as I have said. Now this long, lumbering luggage-train passed in its course within two or three hundred yards of the residences of most of us, whilst the station was much farther away. The gradient was unfavourable, the train heavy, and it was an understood thing that the engine-driver was not to stop

to put us down, but slacken speed to some five or six miles an hour, when we might get out as best we could.

On this occasion we had a carriage next the engine, and a long line of luggage trucks, say forty, fifty, or sixty, behind us. We arrived at the spot where I meant to descend. The train slackened, and I opened the carriage door. It was very dark. I could not see the ground, but I swung my right foot lightly as I hung on to the carriage, my left hand on the door handle, my left foot on the step, and looked earnestly down before jumping. I could not see, but I knew we were passing the proper place, and the rest urged me on; so I jumped and pitched upon a raised heap of fresh ballast. The ballast yielded under me, I slipped and fell, rolling towards the train. Inside the carriage they shout and scream to the driver to stop the train, but the rattle overpowers their voices and he does not hear them. If they had succeeded, they would have killed me with their kindness. But they failed, and I of course knew nothing about it.

They decided to say no word at the station, wisely enough; of course they knew I should not wish the affair to be noised about if I were safe, and if, as they all felt sure was the case, I was cut to pieces, they could do nothing for me. So, when the train pulled up,—for be sure no one else jumped down that night,—they got lights from the lamp-room and hurried back. They found the crushed remains of my hat. They searched the line, the embankment foot, and the slope all over, and then they decided to go first to

my rooms, to see if by any chance I should have escaped. They did so, and entering found me seated before the fire, a churchwarden in my mouth, a glass of brandy-and-water on the table by my side, and my feet on the hob, contemplating a bright fire. The fact was, that when I fell and rolled towards the train, expecting nothing but instant death, I tumbled into a hole eight inches deep, alongside of, and indeed almost under the rail. My head fitted into this hole as the passing wheel brushed off my hat. My body and feet lay away from the train over the six-foot. Was I safe? The first waggon did not touch me, although the rattle from the loosened rail joint as the wheels crossed it, jarred me terribly, striking terror into my very soul. Clank, clank, clank, the coupling-chains passed over, and the leading wheels of the second waggon shook me again as they rolled over the loose joint. Then I began to feel safe; but anon I remembered that a hanging coupling or a dragging tarpaulin would be fatal to me. I listened painfully for the jangle of a loose chain, but ere half-a-dozen waggons had passed, I am unconscious of all but the great fact that the footboards were travelling three inches or less above my head, and travelling, oh, so slowly! Would they *never* be past?

A horrible desire to raise my head took possession of me. I felt that I *must* raise it, even though it were to be sliced in two the next instant in consequence of my doing so. I clenched my teeth and fists, and tried to pray that I might have strength to resist the infernal temptation. Just when that temptation had become positively agonizing in its strength, and when

I was on the point of succumbing to it, I saw a red glare above my head. It was the 'tail lamp,' and the train had passed! But not for me; it was all going on just the same. More waggons, more and still more, seemed to be rolling above me, and at last *I lifted my head!* As I live to write this, I solemnly declare it was with a sort of wonder as to what it would all feel like soon where I was going to. Nothing touched me, however. I stared wildly around, and then fainted.

Presently the air and the stillness revived me, and I knew that I was safe. But at first I felt almost disappointed. I know that had there been half a score more of carriages to that train my head would have gone up and gone off, for my presence of mind had left me. I could barely stagger home, when I drank a tumbler of brandy quite full at a draught; it steadied me. The rest—the pipe, etc.—were mere bravado. But I paid for it. That night, or morning rather, after I had gone to bed, and my rejoicing companions had left me, I started up shivering, rattling the very bed with my shaking, my teeth chattering, and my heart beating in violent terror. It was long before I left that bed. Something like brain fever, said to be slight by the doctors, but bad enough to me, set in. I was dosed and drenched, and emerged from my sick-room, after some weeks, cured of my fever, but no better, for I had lost all tone and courage.

This was the year of the second visitation of the cholera. The plague was at that moment crossing the Continent, and its rapid strides fascinated me. I

eagerly read the daily reports of its progress, and waited with a firm belief that I should be one of its very first victims. If in the street I saw two people meet and indulge in laughter, I shuddered to think of their levity with this scourge so near. Happily, I obtained leave of absence, and went down to Torquay, where Dr. Macintosh soon cured me. I was well. I returned to Leeds, and when the cholera *did* come there, it attacked my landlady about the very first. She slept in the bedroom next to mine. I remained where I was through it all, and as work was just then slack, I spent much time in helping the homœopathic practitioner, Dr. Creswell.

Hours passed into days, days into years, and between the boisterous, jovial London life, and the ever varying country one, time flew indeed. In Yorkshire I tried yet again to kill myself. Walking over the now almost finished contract, entrusted to that best of all good men, George Thomson, we came to a swamp which had swallowed up many hundred thousand yards of 'muck.' This had bulged out to the surface hundreds of feet away, and now we were piling over it, to cross upon small bays or openings. The driving machine stood on a little platform, the pile half driven, the 15 cwt. ram hitched up 20 feet high. Thomson and I stood upon the platform talking 'shop,' he with his hand on the upright guide, I leaning carelessly over the pile. We finished our talk, and Thomson stepped off the platform, whilst I rose from my lounging position to follow. I had just got my head out of the way, when crash! down came the 15 cwt. ram.

In London, we had heard Jenny Lind in *Sonnambula* and the *Daughter of the Regiment*, and all the mob of us made a raid from Yorkshire into Manchester when she came there, and heard her again. What a turmoil! No such *furore* since Malibran, those who remembered said. Beds were at high premium; tickets an impossibility unless at several hundred per cent. premium. The beauties of three counties were there, and gaiety reigned.

I 'assisted' also at the opening of the Exhibition of 1851, and have rather a confused recollection of getting up in the middle of the night, getting into a carriage, and driving furiously through the streets to the rear of a line of carriages miles long. I recollect traversing many streets at a pace averaging about half a mile an hour, and how, at junctions, the carriages of the 'upper ten' kept trying to break the line, generally to be forced back by the police, to take rank an hour behind. The 'ten' act better now, I am told. I remember the great building, the great fountain, the great organ galleries, the great cage, wherein reposed the 'Koh-i-Noor,' with its throng of wondering gazers, and the two policemen on guard. I remember the galaxy of gaily-dressed people, the crash of bands and organ into 'God save the Queen' as Her Majesty and all the royal family walked up the aisle with a noble following. Was it not the old Iron Duke who here forgot to raise his hat to 'God save the Queen'? I remember all standing up and listening with rapt attention to some speeches of which we could not catch one word. I recollect the utter abandonment of the remotest expectation of ever getting home again, and I

remember also many ticket days, cheap days, and so on, intervening before we went through the appointed performance on the day of closing, after which the Great Exhibition was a thing of the past.

All this time my last days in London, and eke in all England, were approaching, although I did not know it then. In Yorkshire, too, we were rapidly drawing near the completion of our work, after which I was to be transported to the uttermost ends of the earth. But for the present we kept it up down in Yorkshire, and went through the usual full rush for the finish or opening time, even to stopping the train with the Government Inspector, on pretence of pointing out to that unwilling gentleman the peculiar construction of an abutment or iron girder, which necessitated crawling up and down a soft embankment, forty feet high mayhap. We did this in order that the last length of rails might be finished. The opening day came, and with it the usual mob of great guns, the usual doubtful run of 'there and back again,' chiefly 'to see how far it could be safely accomplished,' although *how* or *why* safely accomplished none could tell; for the inquisitive Yorkshire rustics hung on to the footboards, climbed to the carriage roofs, bestrode the buffers in numbers, to the imminent hazard of their lives at every movement of the train. We returned to the inevitable dinner. I am not quite sure, but I think it was at this dinner that I last saw George Stephenson.

I enjoyed, if that word can be used where the subject is so intensely painful, some personal experiences of the Irish famine, which are perhaps worth recording. They

belong properly to an earlier date than that which I have reached in my somewhat disjointed narrative, but I have had no opportunity of introducing them sooner to the notice of my readers. In 1847, the 40th Regiment had returned from India and were quartered in Leeds. We showed the officers all the attention we could, and found them a fine set of gentlemen. When they were ordered to Dublin, I received a pressing invitation to go and visit them there; and I went, taking up my quarters with their paymaster, Capt. ——, at Beggar's Bush barracks. The usual round of amusement was going on, and I enjoyed that visit much, my position as guest of the 40th giving more opportunity of enjoyment than most strangers find even in Dublin. But this is not what remains upon my memory; it is that terrible potato famine. In the height of it and its accompanying pestilence, Capt. —— and I travelled through the south of Ireland.

Some villages were all but deserted, cabins being roofless and tenantless, save where a poor creature lay on the floor to die, listless seemingly, and quite past complaining. Then we would pass where two or more roads met, and would be surrounded by half-clad, wholly starved wretches, who crawled out of hedges and ditches, clamorous for food. One old woman I remember especially, haggard and wrinkled almost out of the form of humanity. She was eighty years old and more, she said, and had dragged herself out of a hole to beg. This hole had been her home for a month. All her family had gone down before fever and famine, and she prayed to die too. We passed a gaunt man and

woman and two shivering children standing waiting to die by the roadside. The elders did not beg, the children did not cry; they scarcely seemed to notice us. But I could not pass them so, and threw at their feet half-a-crown. Then they were *not* too far gone for emotion. The road was muddy, but after a moment of amazement, down dropped all upon their knees, and with clasped hands showered blessings upon us we did not wait to hear. But the whole history of this famine has been so often and so well told, that even were it not beyond my province I would not attempt it. I gave away all my money, and barely kept the fare back to Dublin.

I said good-bye to Yorkshire for ever! I have ceased to look for a coming back. I have been banished from dear old England for twenty-three years now, and I should not 'know my way about,' I suppose. London would be strange to me, with its trams, its underground railways, its Thames embankments. I reoccupied my Gray's Inn chambers, and there waited, my only business being to call two or three times a week at 134 George Street and inquire what appointments were going.

This is a necessary consequence of the wandering life the younger civil engineers lead who are not yet permanently established in any business of their own. Any special work ended, there must be other work sought for; and although, in my day at least, it came readily enough, still there might well be a few weeks wherein to waste the 'hot blood.' I fear I did not apply at all until some weeks were over, but when I did,

having exhausted the theatres, gardens, and museums, I found two or three opportunities coming, but not yet quite come. So I waited, not altogether sorry at the delay, and having the opportunity of seeing the funeral of the gallant old Duke.

Presently the choice of various appointments and occupations on the Continent, and also in India and Canada, was offered to me, but I had not decided when my fate came. Strolling along the Strand near Temple Bar, a hansom dashed up to the curb beside me, and a voice shouted, 'Hallo, Henry, what are *you* doing here?' Well might I moralize upon fortune's queer freaks. I had as much notion of assisting to populate Australia as I had of ballooning as a profession, but thus it was that my fate came to me in the Strand and a hansom cab. In the cab sat the good-looking secretary of the —— and —— Company, my brother-in-law.

'What are you doing here?' he said again as he stepped on to the footpath; 'I did not know that you were in London.'

'Didn't you, now? Well, I am waiting.'

'What do you mean?'

I told him. He thought a moment. 'Well,' said he, 'my Company are sending me out to Sydney, New South Wales, to establish a branch there; I sail on the 1st May.' This was the 24th April. 'You know what a row there is out there about the gold and returning diggers?'

'Do I?'

'Come, no nonsense; there should be a fortune for your profession there. Come with me.'

'Uncertain, rather, isn't it? Sixteen thousand miles on speculation, whilst all the time for consideration is as long as you choose to keep a cab grinding the curb at three shillings an hour. Don't you think it's hasty?'

'Oh, don't sharpen your *blasé* wit upon me; it's thrown away. I can offer you the —— appointment, certain.'

'How much?'

'Two hundred pounds a year to begin with.'

'Splendid! all round the world for £200 a year!'

'Nonsense! do be serious! It would be sure to increase, and then the general practice.'

'Ahem!'

'What a nuisance you are! I'll tell you what, then. My directors give me £—— for the trip. Come with me and I'll frank you. If you don't like it, on my return I'll frank you back again.'

'Done with you! But I cannot get my kit ready, instruments bought, and mother seen in five days; besides Manchester and'——

'All right, I don't think you can. I'll write from Liverpool; but you'll go?'

'Yes, I will.'

He jumped into his cab, and I sailed on the 10th of May in a Dutch East Indiaman. So was my fate fated.

Rushing about, making adieus, I did not feel like leaving at all, especially for ever! Nay, I looked to be back again in twelve months at longest. I took the whole thing as a sort of spree. But all the same I had shaken the hands of my oft-mentioned dear friends for

the last time. I had looked into my mother's big soft eyes, I had kissed my sisters for ever! My mother! how she followed me about that Kenilworth cottage with those grief-filled eyes the last two days! How, when I was rattling about the house, full of excitement and business, shouting out—too carelessly, forsooth—'I am going to California to fetch some gold for you,' she, poor mother, broke down, and crying, 'Not *that* song, Henry, not *that;* how *can* you?' fell on my neck all but broken-hearted. I tried to comfort her, telling her I should only be away a year, I had often been longer. It was all useless. How well I remember her saying in that little greenhouse attached to the cottage, 'No, Henry, I shall never see you again; the young *may* die; the old *must.*' Dear mother, I did not know how good you were then, or how bad I was.

It was over; my mother stood at the door, handkerchief in hand, till we turned the corner—that corner dividing this world from the next for her and me. My sisters stand upon the platform, their forms diminishing in distance, until a black tunnel shuts them out for ever too. My mother was right; she died three years later.

Presto! begone, dull memory! Change we the scene! Liverpool—the good ship *Watergus* hauling out into the stream—two days in the Mersey, a gale outside. During that time I saw 'Goldfinder' win the Chester Cup. Then one black morning, the 'song of the anchor' rose up, the steam tug roared alongside, and we were off. Good-bye, old lighthouse! many a great crab have I hunted from the big boulders you are built upon ere you were

thought of. Good-bye, white-walled New Brighton! I knew you well when white houses were scarce with you, and sandbank solitude easy to attain. Good-bye, old river! you will never bear me on your heaving bosom more. Good-bye, old coast-line! with your shoals and sandbanks, familiar through many a trip since the bad time of the *Rothesay Castle*. Good-bye, more distant Rhyl! you are a great, flaunting town now, with your railway and your shipping; but *I* knew you when you had but a dozen cottages or so to call your own, and one might walk from end to end of you and meet no soul who could speak 'the English.' Farewell, old Clwyd! dear old river, good-bye! you upon whose grassy banks I have slept the sweet sleep of childhood often, whose sparkling waters I have whipped for trout and salmon. Your water is not so clear now, and I doubt your salmon; yet 'tis sorrow to see you for the last time, old friend. Good-bye, Snowdonia! farewell, great jumble of old mountains! I shall never wander over your jagged peaks again, nor drink your limpid water, nor rest upon your green oases. Good-bye, old snow-capped friends! I go where snow is never seen. Night closes as I bid farewell to Great Orme's Head and Puffin Island, and I am very lonely. In the morning we are at sea. 'My native land, farewell!'

It takes some time, as has been often said and sung, to shake down on shipboard; and when you are an Englishman in a Dutch ship, with a splendidly obstinate captain, who will believe he understands English and insists upon speaking it, whilst you are determined that Dutch and German are identical, and will keep bestow-

ing your indifferent acquaintance with the latter upon 'all hands,' perhaps it takes a little longer to settle down than usual. At any rate, we had an exceptional shaking down. We tumbled into the Bay of Biscay the day after the gale which had detained us ceased there; we were becalmed two days. Becalmed, ye gods! True, we had no wind; but the seas rolled at us one upon another in cowardly assault upon our helplessness. 'There we lay all that day'—ay, and another too—'in the Bay of Biscay.' We dipped our mainyard into a black mountain on one side, and the masts groaned—as well they might. The sails flapped with heavy bang against the groaning masts, and the ship shivered, and upon the deck poured several thousand tons, more or less, of sea water. 'Then we rode back,'—ships *do* ride, don't they?—and gave an equilibrium dip on the other side to the retreating mountain, as the several thousand tons of water, more or less, tore through the scupper-holes or over the bulwarks in haste to rejoin their retreating companion. We got away at last, with a shifted cargo and a list. Thus were we shaken into our places literally.

A lot of capital is often made of a three months' voyage; but this is a 'really' story, as children have it, and I cannot make much of mine, I fear. To dismiss the weather: we had stunsails set for some seven weeks, were becalmed for two days only on the Line, when 'Neptune' came on board, of course. I had never previously given much consideration to the subject, but it was a surprise to find that Neptune was a Dutchman. There was as much confusion and riot on board the

Watergus that night as though she had been English. The ship navigated herself with the help of none but the captain and first mate. We hove-to for three days in a gale off the Cape, during which heaving-to we stove in some planks near the bows, and blankets and confusion reigned for some hours.

Well, it may be agreeable to an old salt to lie in bed, 'but not to sleep,' and hear every now and again the heavy thud of a tumbling mass of sea upon the deck; to listen to its bump-bump-bumping down the cabin stairs, and to its murmuring, gurgling greeting round his bunk, soon followed by rattling ropes overhead, hoarse shouts, and the quick tramp of running feet. I say this *may* be agreeable to an old salt, but I don't like it. I would infinitely rather see it all from a stage box, however badly acted.

One morning at breakfast says the captain, 'We shall sight St. Paul's directly. I am steering for it to set chronometers.'

'Land ho!' There it was as he spoke. After that we carried an eight or nine-knot breeze through to the Straits, and until we turned the corner and began our northing for 'Sydney Town.' We had light, baffling winds for the last few days, and when we came to the Heads our captain indignantly defied the pilot, who came off to us in a hurry and a whaleboat, waving his hat wildly as we drifted into dangerous proximity to the 'North Head;' our usually lethargic Dutchman muttering, as he reluctantly resigned command, that he had the latest charts, and knew 'kvite so vell' as did the pilot. We had no wind to take us up the harbour

that night, and so anchored just inside George's Head; our savage captain giving no orders of any kind for the accommodation of the pilot, whom, however, we cabin passengers took in hand, and made as comfortable as circumstances admitted, with sofa, rugs, whisky-and-water, etc.

Poor Captain Gibson! he never forgot it. He had but to meet me in Sydney's streets to say, 'Ah, it's getting a long time ago now, sir, since you came out in that Dutchman with the surly captain. You were very kind to me, though, that night.'

Perhaps they have settled their differences now: one went down with his ship and all hands in Indian waters; the other died peacefully after his stormy life, the keeper of Hornby Lighthouse, New South Wales.

So much for the voyage. The voyagers! Well, it is curious—strangely interesting, indeed—to look back for more than twenty years and trace the lives of those voyagers, and think how differently fate—and too often their own conduct — has ordered it from what they anticipated.

Our passengers were not more in number than could be readily individualized. First, then, our only other cabin passenger was a youngster of seventeen years, very determined, and, I will say for him at that time, very disagreeable. He was so self-willed, and withal so necessarily ignorant of the world, that I augured ill for him. But no; he got rubbed down amongst his fellows, and no doubt his firmness stood him in good stead. I met him five or six years after our landing, and he was wonderfully improved, and going into the country to

settle down with his wife and child. I never heard more of him until six weeks since; but then a friend of mine, only of twelve months' standing, chanced to be travelling on Government business in the north, and arrived one evening at a well-known station, where he was hospitably entertained by the 'super' or manager. This super he described as a stern, determined man, who would have things properly done—a treasure to the squatter, disliked by the hands; in fact, just what he should be. He happened to mention my name, when the super went into a series of exclamations, inquiries, etc. This was my fellow-passenger, getting on well, and expecting to be a partner soon.

Have you ever seen a genuine Dutch captain, 'mein vriends?' Have you ever occupied for three months that captain's state cabin? Have you ever fed for three months with a Dutch captain and Dutch mates? Our captain was rotund and glossy, not to say greasy; as well, indeed, he might be, with all the butter he ate. He was, perhaps, five feet five inches high, and perhaps four feet round the waist. He objected to being interrogated as to our progress, which was annoying, marking off the chart being an institution at sea. He was intensely hospitable, and grievously offended if we did not devour as much per meal of the greasy but excellent food as he and his mates did, the second of whom was certainly the largest eater I have ever seen. This was awkward. The thing was simply impossible, and the impossible cannot always be done. He grieved and protested accordingly, and replied to a prolonged explanation with, 'I mean it, I mean it.' What he

really did mean we only found out at the close of the voyage; and that was that such had been his belief previous to explanation, 'Me vancy, you no loike him.'

We had schnapps—not the vaunted adulteration of to-day, but schnapps genuine—at 7.30 A.M., to give an appetite for breakfast; schnapps at 12.30, to give an appetite for dinner; schnapps at 2.30, to assist digestion; schnapps at 5.30, to give an appetite for tea; and bread and cheese and schnapps for supper, at 9.30. Now, for one in those days quite unaccustomed to spirits, perhaps being schnapped at so many times a day was a little confusing, but there was no escape. I have had a virtuous horror of schnapps ever since.

Our second mate had a red nose. He was fond of schnapps, which he measured into his tumbler to the height of three fingers. He had been a skipper on his own account, but schnapps had been too much for him. He prophesied shipwreck and drowning to me ere we left the Mersey. His digestion must have been 'out of order,' as Boucicault has it; and no wonder, seeing how he could eat!

We had a tureen full of porridge brought in first at breakfast. Our second mate despised spoons and ladles, he just took the tureen by the horns (handles, I mean) and filled a large soup plate. Into this he mixed, say, a quarter of a pound of butter, more or less, and half a tumbler of treacle; *presto!* and all was gone, and the mate tilting the tureen for a little more! Next we had fried ham. About six pounds of it, I suppose, would come on to the table, accompanied by a basin of butter,

melted. Half of all this fell to the lot of the second mate. Next we had dried ling or other salt fish, a heaped-up dishful, with more butter melted. The second mate would attack this with undiminished vigour, consuming a pile of fish afloat in butter, with mustard and pepper enough to destroy the throats of half a dozen ordinary sailors. After this he merely trifled with a round or two of bread and cheese, and could so wait philosophically for dinner-time. All this, by the way, he washed down with huge draughts of mild beer. Perhaps he was sometimes bilious. Dutch cheeses we also had, which were very good, and about the size and form of a sugarloaf. We ate these with bread as sandwiches.

Our other meals were all good, barring the everlasting melted butter. We always had soups, fish, and meat or poultry, fresh or preserved, sweets, and vegetables, including piles of potatoes, kitchen gardens of green stuffs, cabbages, cauliflowers, and *roats*, as Yankees call turnips, carrots, and such small deer. All these went down before the combined attacks of captain and mate. Certainly, if the five-and-fifty other sailors and passengers were equal to a like consumption, we could have had but little room for cargo.

There were about a dozen passengers in the intermediate room, which really was the cabin. 'Place aux dames.' The only unmarried woman on board was a Miss ——. She was plain, much given to moonlight and the first mate. The lady was coming out to some friends, but they did not meet her, nor, I believe, did she ever find them—a sad position for a young woman to

be in. However, she took steadily to work, and in a couple of years' time held a good position as forewoman in some large establishment. She then married one in a similar position. After that I lost sight of her, although I am told by my great authority, William Yeoman (of whom presently), that they live comfortably not far from where I now write.

Poor Coltate, her opposite neighbour on the ship, had a short career. He was a young man of twenty-seven, good-looking, and a little wild, who could not bear his father's profession, that of a surgeon, and was therefore coming out to learn the work of a squatter. He was in great force all the voyage out, anticipating an uncontrolled out-door life. He was always dreaming of kangarooing, herding cattle, and wild duck shooting as everyday work. He was to be at it night and day just at first, and then the future spread before him all rose-colour. After some few days in Sydney, he went on to a station northwards, and there fell down dead upon the verandah, soon—very soon—after arriving.

Then there was a great, rollicking lad, coming out consigned to his uncle, who is understood to have had a plethora of such consignments, by the bye; a round-faced, rosy-cheeked boy of sixteen, innocent of all but five feet ten inches of handsome jollity when he came on board. He could smoke strong tobacco, drink strong drink, and talk strong talk too, when we entered Sydney Heads. He was sent up the bush, and I saw him but once, a year or two afterwards. He had accomplished his six feet, and had too many of the airs and graces of a finished Colonial.

I anticipated short life, and not too merry, for him; but my universal informant tells me that his instincts carried him through, and that he is now a credit to his adopted country.

Next I see a certain Mr. E——. Mr. E—— had a wife and family with him. He was a gentleman of the long-featured, straight-haired, browny-white necktie breed, of strong dissenting tendencies. He was coming out with a consignment of boots and shoes, with which some large firm at home had entrusted him. He was indeed lucky. He hit the nail exactly on the head, arrived at the very nick of time, took the largest shop he could get in the best situation, and made a fortune in next to no time. He returned to England fully twelve years since, I fancy. He was a rare type of his class. He was always dressed in black, of course. On shipboard he wore an old black necktie and large limp collars. On shore his tie was white. He spoke slowly, hemmed and ha-ed to gain time, and stroked his long face with his long hand after every sentence, uttering the most commonplace truisms as though they were a special inspiration. He was quite ignorant of everything save boots and shoes, and the straight cut to heaven. His conversation, when he condescended to converse,—and this righteous cobbler never failed to let you know that it *was* a condescension,—was something after the following manner:—'H'm, don't you think, Mr. ——' (he was too much wrapt in his own superiority to remember your name), 'that—ah—h'm—it is very extraordinary that—ah—h'm—those fishes should be able to keep up so easily with our—h'm—ship?' and

down stroked the hand from the crown of his head to the tip of his chin—a long distance.

'But you know, Mr. E——, that they have these strong propelling powers to'—

'Ah, indeed! H'm—Providence adapts them to their element—ah—as the wind to the shorn lamb, to be sure;' and down came the caressing hand again.

Strongly am I tempted to reply, *à la* Sheridan or Voltaire—who was it?—'But we do not shear lambs.' That man always troubled me with his mundane ignorance and his intimacy with God. His wife was a round-featured little woman, intended to be jolly, but with all her features now under subjection, excepting her eyes, which *would* twinkle and laugh at times. Pattern children were theirs. The eldest, aged fourteen, was a model boy, who had no individual being; indeed, his soul was his father's, not his own. When the family, ten years later, left for England, he declined to go. 'H'm—strange indeed to say, Mr. ——, he is not—ha—all that I could have expected—h'm.' Down came the hand exactly in the old manner. Now he was exactly what *I* had expected. 'But I feel—yes—I feel that I did my duty to him, and that is a great comfort.' Three weeks since I met that son several days consecutively, and he was working out a spree conscientiously.

Next, a gentle young girl, with a consumptive husband. He was a farmer's son, bringing out some means, with intention to settle in the warmer Australian climate. They were hopeful at first; but, poor man, he was sick all the voyage, and like to die. They never got farther than Wolomoloo, Sydney. She

buried him, I believe, and returned home. I hope she is consoled long ago. She was a good little thing, and quite young.

In the fore cabin were three young Welshmen, bad at English, but strong, hearty fellows, bent upon making rapid fortunes at the diggings, full of wonder at everything, but with a set purpose too. I met these three still all together, say four years later. They had done it — had gone through many vicissitudes, had borne hunger and hardship, and still held together even when fortune favoured them. They had their reward, and were now going back to the land of dd's, w's, and ff's, still together. Their inland town built upon consonants would be proud of them. Their intention was to take a farm and work it conjointly. They were rigged out for a cabin passage home—over-dressed, of course; yet how different looked those bronzed, bearded, self-confident men from the rosy lads of four years ago! Tried and proven, they must have astonished the natives of Llanrwst or Bettws-y-Coed.

There were yet Welshmen of another sort in that fore cabin, Jacobs and Jenkins, cousins or brothers-in-law. Yes; Jenkins had married Jacobs' sister. Jacobs had married a St. Asaph dressmaker, for Jacobs had been a chemist's assistant, and was by way of a gentleman, a good stamp of colonist, surely; and he soon showed it, poor fellow. Mrs. Jacobs, although just then imbued with ideas of gentility too, had the right go in her. They intended to begin a new life in Australia as lady and gentleman, and tried hard to commence it on the *Watergus*. He would not take the work he could get

when they came ashore, and they were soon hard up. Then she set to work with a will at her own old trade, threw the nonsense behind her, and supported both of them. At last came the work he was waiting for, as town traveller to a wine merchant. Why, he was settled for life! He was, for in five years he was dead. When his travelling left him, they took a public-house, and here he soon did himself to death. His widow, a buxom landlady, keeps or did keep on the house. Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins quarrelled with the Jacobs a deadly quarrel. They went to Wolomoloo to live, and thence Jenkins, wife, and baby went to the diggings. Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins are myths to me from that time. I daresay I have often met the baby in these latter days, a big, bearded man of twenty-five, staggering under a heavy swag, or, it may be, swaggering under a billycock hat and a red belt with tassels, probably a black pipe in his mouth.

Last but not least of our passengers was William Yeoman, well known in Sydney. It is a really remarkable circumstance that I should this day, on finishing my day's writing with the word 'mouth,' have met Yeoman, who said, 'I have just returned from Jenkins' funeral.' This was the very Jenkins I have mentioned above, who, it seems, had returned from his wanderings and taken to letting lodgings. 'But it's in the paper', said Yeoman; and so it was. 'September 2d (1876), at his residence, Jenkins' Family Hotel, Erskine Street, John Jenkins, in his fifty-fourth year.' I found him to lose him, indeed. But William Yeoman! Who will recognise my picture, in the round-faced, jolly, well-nourished person of the Yeoman of to-day? William

Yeoman, a tall, thin, dark-haired, anxious-looking man, with a manner and look of determination that augured well for his success; a thin, pale, delicate-looking woman at his side, with a less hopeful expression; and their children grouped round them. There was little Jimmy, who died, the beloved of gruff old Captain Kramer, and the pet of the ship, and all the rest of them. We were all very fond of you, Jimmy, but your mother died early, and you would have been twenty-eight years old now, and perhaps—who knows?

Yeoman was a man whose oneness of look attracted, and whose shrewdness and common sense attracted also. He was but a journeyman then, and his easy but respectful bearing attracted more. His unchanging manners to those who might be his worldly superiors at that time, during all these years when he has been going up, while they at best have remained stationary, have attracted me most of all. A man of a thousand I thought then, and am sure now. How could he fail here, when determination and perseverance alone were wanted, for his class at least, who had been saving up sixpences for thirteen years at home, with the unchanging purpose of taking his family with him to a less crowded land, where he could look forward to a better future than was reasonably to be expected in overstocked England? Many a talk had we during that voyage. He was anxious, especially as he knew that the diggings' discovery had turned the Australian world topsy-turvy. He became more anxious as we 'neared the land' wherein he was to achieve fortune, and I shall not forget wishing him luck as I shook his hand on his going

ashore. Nor shall I forget *his* shaking *my* hand on his return to the ship, and his joyous information that he had got work as long as he liked at seventeen shillings a day! Seventeen shillings a day! 'William Yeoman, 99 George Street; private residence, so-and-so;' not much now, but *then*. I doubt whether in all your life you bore a happier heart than beat joyfully in your breast that last night on board the *Watergus*.

The last act in the 'panorama of the sea' is Sydney Harbour. It is useless to attempt a description. It has been described well and badly a thousand and one times; only I wish all my countrymen could bask in its beauties on a bright, sunny spring morning, after a three months' voyage. How strange it seemed, when the Government boat came alongside with the health officer of the port, and strangers trod our familiar decks, hardly caring to look at the adventurous voyagers who had braved the perils of the deep, but treating us as the ship which arrived this morning, following those two which came in yesterday, and preceding that one just signalled as coming in! This last was the *Walter Hood*. She was on her first voyage, and we left the Mersey and beat up Sydney Harbour in company, but had not sighted one another on the route. How deserted the old ship looks, as the running chain rattles through the hawse-hole, and her anchor clips Australian soil! How cruel it seems to chain her up there, that buoyant thing of seeming life, which for three months has made no let or stop—to chain her there and leave her to her own resources, abandoning that wheel which has held its own familiar,

by day and night, for a quarter of a year! How strange to walk perpendicularly, without balancing yourself against a rolling foot-hold! Odd, too, to see no guards upon the table, and not to have to prepare yourself at all points against leaping tumblers, plates, and cups and saucers, all of which lie as quietly upon the still table as if they had not been trying to commit suicide daily for thirteen weeks. As evening advances, the lights of the distant town seem close at hand, and the little puffing harbour steamer will surely run us down! But it does not; it passes safely. Yet, though the harbour is large enough in all conscience, you feel cramped and choked for want of space. The last night on board! Passengers going and coming; friends arriving for some, when jollity rules the short night; others lying sleepless through the long hours, solitary listeners to the noisy revelry; watermen going backwards and forwards, dropping mysteriously over the ship's sides and hanging on to each other's boats alongside, with much chaffing and some quarrelling. Many anxious hearts on board, and some hopeful ones.

Part II.

AUSTRALIA.

CHAPTER VIII.

FIRST DAYS IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

First Experiences at Sydney—The Suburbs—Botany Bay and a 'Wild Beast' Story—The Gold Fever—Lucky Diggers—Rents and Revelry—An Australian Cremorne—Servants—Some Personal Experiences—A Journey into the Bush—Roads in New South Wales—A Ridiculous Blunder—Public-houses in the Bush.

I WENT ashore next morning to seek a shelter for my head. I ate bread and butter and drank draughts of beer at the very first public-house I came to. These were the days of returning diggers, of mirth, dissipation, and reckless extravagance. Presently I went into a shop for some tobacco. It came to 1s. 3d. The tobacconist had no change, so he said that I must either pay 1s. 6d. or have it for 1s., 'it didn't matter.' I found a room at £2, 2s. a week in Hunter Street, which is perhaps two hundred yards from the wharf. After some search I found a barrowman who condescended to go for my boxes. He charged me 10s. 6d., and would not help to carry them up-stairs.

Drunken people of both sexes were lying about the streets—a mere matter of course, seemingly. For the next few days I attempted only to *do* the town.

Sydney in 1854 was not the Sydney of to-day by any means. I suppose, for I have no statistics at hand, that it might number 40,000 or 50,000 inhabitants, instead of its increasing 200,000. It covered, with many a gap between, its couple of square miles, instead of its present ten or twelve. There was scarcely a handsome building in the place. Now we possess as many as most towns of our size, and the wretched, old, tumble-down, rotting wooden hovels are fast making way for first-class shops with cut-stone fronts and great plate-glass windows, or equally first-class stores and offices. Above all others, those who remember the Pitt Street of twenty years ago would not know it now.

Suburbs existed, and that was all. Balmain, a too thickly peopled island now, had only a few houses on it. The north shore—that most beautiful of all beautiful sites on this lovely harbour—had still fewer, although puny steamers plied irregularly to both, being sometimes taken off for half a day or more, as the emergencies of the shipping required their services. Railway was not; so the now populous suburbs were, as yet, little frequented bush — Newtown, the nearest, excepted. Wolomoloo, although now much chosen by returning diggers, storekeepers at the diggings, and others, for building upon, was only lately reclaimed from nature, and had as yet few houses. Paddington was the barracks, with the usual surroundings and nothing more, approached by a sand track about to become a road. Watson's Bay, the 'Heads' lighthouse, etc., already a very favourite drive with the citizens, was

approached by an uncertain track through a sea of heavy sand, and the excursion of seven miles and back was a day's work for any horse. The grandest view in the world, or nearly so, repaid the toil many times told, though *not*, perhaps, to the horse.

The road to Botany, also seven miles off, was a slough of despond. The Sir Joseph Banks Hotel flourished without other rival than the unpretending South Head Inn, where folks were only expected to refresh. The Botany grounds and house received all pic-nics, weddings, and dinner parties. This was the only suburban *amusement* ground, and it furnished a well-stocked larder, a well-kept garden, a wide stretch of beach to Botany Bay, a splendid enclosed bathing-place approached by a platform seemingly a quarter of a mile long, on wooden uprights driven into the sand, good beds (very *hard*, though, I remember), and a menagerie rather on an extensive scale, with lions, tigers, hyenas, an elephant, monkeys, many native animals, kangaroos, dingoes, emus, and the rest.

Now-a-days Botany is one, and not the first by any means, of many competing pleasure places, and its glory has departed. Of its bathing-house and platform but two or three rotten posts remain, the perch of weary or watching sea-fowl. The menagerie is a thing of the past. Wedding parties seek the cool heights of the Blue Mountains or the charms of Manly Beach; and in place of the afternoon bustle of carriages, buggies, and equestrians, which daily kept a large stable filled and two ostlers overworked only ten years ago, an omnibus, fare 1s., plies there every hour, and a somewhat

lower scale of pleasure-seekers come down by it at two o'clock, spend a shilling, and return by the four o'clock 'bus.

But still in fine weather, Botany, when not held in bondage by mosquitoes or flies, is very enjoyable. There is still a quoit ground, a new commodious bar and billiard room, and pedestrian ground, all added by Maloney of the *Café de Paris*, whom it did not pay. Yes; Botany is knocked out of time by excursion steamers, railway trains, cricket grounds, etc. As I write (it is the 24th May), I look at a newspaper filled with advertised amusements, in which the space occupied by the Botany programme is small indeed.

But individually, however much forgotten of others, I have indifferently bad reason to remember Botany Bay and its sometime menagerie — especially the menagerie.

'Once upon a time,' I found myself forced to finish some small professional work 'down there' as speedily as might be. I persuaded a friend to ride down with me. The road follows a low, swampy country for the last three or four miles, and crosses on its way the stream which still supplies Sydney with water. This stream is now checked by a series of large dams; but then, after heavy rain flooded the swamps, its main body rushed under the road, which was carried across it by a rough wooden bridge.

It has rained for two days, but is fine when we set off. It begins to rain again presently, however. We go on, and the rain changes from mere raining into a small deluge. We hurry on, splashing through the soaked swamps.

We near the bridge. The wild water is rushing under it, and it totters; even as we look at it, the water carries it away. We push our horses across the swamp above—not without some danger—and bring to the Sir Joseph Banks the pleasing intelligence that the bridge is down.

Here is an agreeable state of things. They have nothing in the house to eat save vegetables and scraps. The animals have already been one day without food. The cart has been sent into Sydney for meat, and now it cannot get back again. The particular piece of ground which is the object of my visit, I find is now under water. As feeding-time approaches, the noise from the dens is terrific. Incessant roars, howls, yells fill the air, accompanied by the banging of heavy bodies against the cage bars. We lie in bed wide awake—at least I know I do—hungry and nervous. The noise never ceases; but morning comes at last, and still the rain pours down, still the song of the menagerie continues with ever-increasing violence.

The keeper is walking up and down in the rain nervously. Indeed, if any of these frantic creatures break out, there will be a catastrophe. Breakfast—biscuits and salt butter, with tea or coffee. The day advances and the rain continues. Dinner—biscuits, cheese and butter, a boiled cabbage, and tea. The coffee is a thing of the past now. We drink beer and champagne, and sleep all afternoon.

We awake, and still it rains. The animals roar on. Supper—biscuits and damper, cheese, tea, and vegetables; the butter has disappeared. Oh, the wild unearthly yells which render the night horrible! The

keeper and all hands remain on guard, with loaded firearms, thick ropes, and the like. We might as well have stayed up for any sleep that is to be got, perhaps better. Just before daylight the row increases, as though a very hell of demons is let loose; then it gradually subsides into unexpected silence. I sleep soundly now, and rise late, to find the breakfast table spread with fresh bread, butter, chops, steaks—in fact, all that's nice. The adventurous driver of the cart, hearing of the broken bridge, has made his weary way back from Sydney on the high ground, by Paddington, Waverley, Randwick, and so on to the hotel. It has taken him two days, and he is none too soon to prevent something serious amongst the furious wild beasts. Yes; I shall remember that. We push our horses back to Sydney through water girth deep all the way to the stream, which we carry at full speed, and I do not know that my work there will ever be done.

But if small, there was life enough of a kind in Sydney then. Lucky diggers were returning loaded with wealth. Unlucky diggers crawled back loaded with dirt and rags, their wretched 'swags' on their more wretched backs. Many more never crawled back at all; but what of that? Gold was here, there, and everywhere. The richest gold districts had been 'spotted,' the richest yields unearthed. Scores of labouring men, to whom a year before four shillings a day had been a godsend, cleared their three to ten ounces a day, and abandoned their claim if the daily yield were under one ounce (four pounds).

Immigrants poured into the country, cattle rose in

price, and bankrupt squatters were saved, to become plutocrats. The lucky returned by scores from the diggings, and scattered their gold like chaff to the four winds. Mosquito-bitten emigrant girls became ladies in right of a husband's nuggets almost before they had set a foot on shore, and flaunted in silks and satins, till some day the husband's cash ran out, and he disappeared as mysteriously as he had come.

Rents rose rapidly, and land increased in value daily. Landlords made fortunes. Many a house returned to its owner, as one year's rent, the entire sum for which its freehold had been sold by some one impatient to be off to the golden fields. Merchants netted two and sometimes three hundred per cent. on cargoes, whilst the ships rotted in the harbour, every hand having 'run.' An able seaman's wages rose from four pounds to twelve pounds per month for coasting runs. Sounds of 'revelry by night' reverberated from public-house to public-house, whilst revellers lay uncared for on road and gutter. Music, dancing, swearing, fighting were all around, and 'all went merry' after such fashion as this. Ay, we were 'up in our stirrups,' 'on the top rungs of our ladders,' indeed! How the money was ever got together, how the exorbitant sums charged for everything were ever paid by the majority, is marvellous now.

Three hundred pounds a year rent for a half-furnished house of six rooms was paid readily. New arrivals, with maybe twenty pounds in their pockets, had to pay two pounds or three pounds a week for board and lodging, and so on. My sickly ship companion, in search of lodgings or a cottage, wandered

about in helpless amaze at the prices asked. At length he and his wife found themselves in Wolomoloo. Here, in the swampy low land, hardly reclaimed from the harbour, and just beginning to be laid out and built upon, they came upon a rubble-walled, shingled, forlorn place of two rooms. This they thought at least they could afford. They knocked, and from a similar hovel on the opposite side of an unformed street lazily emerged a drunken, untidy 'party' of feminine gender. 'To let? Well, she supposed so; she didn't much care, though, rents was rising. Rent? She did not know; they might have it for a month at one pound a week, if it came to that; if they *wanted it for longer, it would be more.*' So much had people lost their heads, so thoroughly did the mass of 'old hands' here believe that they had entered upon a golden millennium.

And the mania grew yet a little longer. It would be startling indeed to calculate the amount of money flung away here and in Melbourne during those first two years, could it be done. With not one-third, I suppose, of its present population, Sydney supported amusements of a kind and variety which would have been extravagant for a city of 300,000 or 400,000 inhabitants. Night-houses and casinos flourished, of course; but perhaps the wildest dissipation was to be found at a 'Cremorne' on the north shore of the harbour, to which steamers plied nightly from the Circular Quay.

Cremorne was a charming and extensive place, situated upon a peninsula forming one of the many broken irregularities which beautify Port Jackson. It comprised an area of very many acres, rising somewhat

steeply from the deep water to a height of perhaps 150 feet, where it gained a level platform of considerable extent. The following were the chief arrangements:— A comfortable and commodious dwelling-house, long the residence of one of the chief of the Government officers, now converted into a bar, a large supper-room, various smaller rooms, etc., all a blaze of light; the usual circular dancing pavilion, with its German band in the centre, roofed over and brilliantly lighted; a green sward all round, and diverging paths with the usual coloured lamps and arches on every side. The view from this lawn on a moonlight night was almost magically lovely. The peninsula proper might be perhaps thirty acres in extent.

All this was open; here, across the half-dozen chains between the two bays, was a two-railed fence, and beyond were thousands of acres of bush. There was nothing to prevent people from wandering to Newcastle or Paramatta, if they liked; and if none wandered so far as that, many wandered far enough to lose character and the last returning steamer.

As night wore on, the mirth did indeed grow fast. Returning steamers bore an uncertain freight, who, having escaped the dangers of the frail landing-place, where a splash of some one falling into the water would for a time silence the struggling, pushing, boisterous crowd, would fill the night with a wild chorus, taken up by fifty voices and heard a mile or two away. But the most dangerous amusement, that of wandering in couples into the silent bush, was sometimes diversified by more immediately palpable peril.

A wild bull resided over there. Yes, truly, there were mobs of wild cattle so near to Sydney so short a time ago! No doubt the boundary-lines of the various herds were well defined; and this particular bull lived there with a small following of wives and sweethearts. Now the noise and glare of Cremorne would sometimes attract him, and he would follow the cattle track down to just outside the line of light, where he would stand contemplating the scene, and uttering a low, dissatisfied bellow. Straying lovers met a glaring pair of lights, and Mr. Bull greeted them with a snort and stamp of his foot. He got the best of the situation generally.

It *would* be startling to a girl, listlessly wandering with her sweetheart along a narrow bush-path, to be abruptly confronted by this wild gentleman, who, instead of 'standing by' and touching his forelock, held the road with impatient glare, lashing his tail and pawing up the ground for greeting.

I know where what is left of that bull could be found now. I put a ball into his carcase, and 'buried him darkly at dead of night' lest I should be fined for doing away with him. I shot one of his lady friends too, whose propensities tended in a similar direction. They lie together; in death they were not divided. At the time of which I write, I held a ninety-nine years' lease of seventy-five acres of the point on the harbour next to Cremorne, upon which I was building; and these wild cattle were immensely destructive to garden development, breaking cockatoo fence or leaping it with ease. But they were *branded*, and to

shoot them was an offence against law—at least so I was told. Cremorne died an unnatural death, of course, and little has been made of it since.

But over and above all things, perhaps the most startling anomaly of that time was the servants! Servants? Ladies and gentlemen, rather, whom you paid to insult you and leave your work undone! Perhaps a practical illustration or two will better show what the state of things then was than any explanation.

First, however, as I remember it now, I may state a circumstance which actually occurred, and treats of the times, and of a servant too, but an exceptionally good one. This girl was quite too good to be long overlooked at such a time as this; accordingly her sweetheart wrote to her to meet him in Melbourne, and be married. He had a good claim at Ballarat or somewhere, and could not leave it long enough to come to Sydney, as had been his intention. It was all right: she did go; he met her; they were married, and she wrote to her late mistress many times to tell of her happiness. But just now she had to go to Melbourne, and had little money; he had sent none. The fare by steerage was some five or six pounds, and that was all she had.

Now it will easily be understood that the steerage, in those times, was no pleasant place for a respectable girl to be in for two or three days; but there was no help for it. £12, 12s. was, I think, the price of a cabin passage. I drove her down to the boat, took her ticket, and found a staid woman going down who took charge of her. But it was very nasty: the cabin was full of men, some drunk, all smoking and talking roughly. I left her

crying miserably, but determined to go. As I stepped off the plank, a man with new clothes on, but, conventionally speaking, not looking like a gentleman, ran against me.

'Here, I say, are any of you going to Melbourne?' No answer.

'Speak, some of you; I'm in a hurry!'

'Why do you ask?' I said.

'Well, sir, me and my wife was going to Melbourne, and I've got a whole cabin ticket (£25); but my mates on the Turon have got a haul, and have called me back. I want some one to take the tickets.'

'But they'll do another trip.'

'Bother another trip! Like enough I may never go now.'

No one wanted them, however, and I then explained that there was a respectable girl in the fore cabin, and I thought I could get back her money, and if he would take that for one of his tickets it would be better than nothing, and a charity too.

'No fear,' says the man; 'I want none of the girl's money. Here you are; she can sell the other, or take her sweetheart with her, for aught I care.'

He shoved the £25 worth into my hand and disappeared. I got her money back. She sold the other half-cabin to the other woman, and went down cabin passenger with ten or twelve pounds in her pocket. All was done and the steamer off in a few minutes. And this is a plain story of a fact which hardly surprised any one then.

All the servant circumstances I propose just now to

remember, occurred in 1854 or 1855. All I can vouch for as happening under my own personal observation. I shall relate them as the experiences of a lady. In February 1854, this lady required a cook, and advertised for one. The advertisement was answered by two applicants, but the first could not cook. Some people might imagine this to be an objection, but no! 'Sure you could taach me, thin!' At fifteen shillings a week and her board!

The second *could* cook. She was young, nice-looking, over-dressed, and of course pert; but familiarity was nothing then, nor is it much now. She had cross-examined the lady with tolerable satisfaction to herself, and preliminaries were all but arranged, when she suddenly said, 'Oh! by the bye, at what time do you dine?' 'Half-past six.' 'Ho! that won't suit me at all; why, I should have no time for *crochet*.' This young lady came under my notice once more. She had engaged with a *real* lady, who gave her seventeen shillings a week, and dined at one o'clock, and let her have nearly all her evenings for crochet or flirting. But there came a drawback. She left her wages in the hands of this real lady, who shortly became insolvent, and the girl lost all.

Another servant this lady had, who did condescend to work, but under certain conditions of equality, well understood by herself. They came out strongly at times. She asserted them by ignoring honorary distinctions, as 'Ma'am,' or 'Sir,' by sitting down when receiving orders for the day, by entering the dining-room abruptly during dinner, and inquiring how we

liked this or that. But she was stronger in out-door impertinence.

On the establishment was a pony phaeton which was attended to by a man-servant. James was an odd compound, but witty and respectful, and I had him many years. One afternoon the phaeton was standing at the door, as the lady was going to town on household matters. She came to the door ready, but the cook, as usual, kept all waiting. At last she came. 'Dear me, cook, you're very long.' 'Couldn't dress quicker.' James to himself in a stage aside, 'Dear me, didn't know as you was the missis.' Cook, looking beyond him superciliously to lady, 'Are you going to drive?' 'No.' 'Oh, then, *I suppose I must ride behind.*' James, as before, 'Oh, dear me, no, ma'am, I'll run by the pony's head.' Another such scene, the last with her, occurred. Suppose James, carriage, and lady waiting as before. Cook appears, and says, 'Oh! are you going to wear your white veil?' 'Yes, cook.' 'Then wait, James. I'll go and put on mine.' When she returned, the phaeton was gone; when the phaeton returned, she was.

One day the lady attends Emigration Office, to hire a servant from amongst a ship-load of newly-arrived emigrants. She hires one, and in the afternoon sends the phaeton to the barracks, so called because once so occupied, but now the emigration depot, for the new maid. Once away, the girl orders the phaeton round to Wolomoloo, where she leaves all her luggage, save a bandbox or so, at 'her brother's;' comes home, confiding to James, however, that she did not mean to stop

long. She arrives, a very nice-looking, rather lady-like girl, too. After a time she is called in.

'Harriet, we have tea at seven.'

'Have you?' Clearly a studied insult.

'You had better make up a fire now, and put the kettle on.'

'I suppose so.' Half an hour passes.

'Harriet!'

'Yes.'

'Are you going to lay the tea things?'

'Presently.'

Seven-thirty—eight o'clock—no tea! I happen to look out into the garden. There is Harriet, deliberately walking round it, occasionally stopping to pull a particularly tempting peach, and then progressing again munching.

'Harriet! do you want to be turned out of the house, or are you coming to get tea ready?'

Harriet, indignantly, 'I did not come to Australia to *make tea;* however, I want to stop till to-morrow morning, so I'll come and do it.'

She did *not* make the tea. In the morning came her brother, a respectable mechanic, and, I must say, apologetically took her things away. He said he was indignant with her, but what could he do? We could imprison her, he knew, but what could *he* do? This was, of course, a deliberate plot. She was pretty, and for her class elegant, and, I daresay, tolerably educated too. She had been a dressmaker at home; one of the mates had fallen in love with her on the passage out, and this was their ruse to get her out, running the risk of those

hiring her not prosecuting, which was, I think, hardly ever done. They were married, and she is now a captain's wife.

The lady, taught by experience, engaged next a middle-aged woman of great colonial experience, with splendid forged references, and unlimited powers of drinking. She was to come at 4 P.M., and didn't; but she came from the nearest public-house early the next morning, and fell asleep on the kitchen floor. On being awakened after a time, and ordered off, she seized the lady by the hair, and—after bumping her head a few times against the wall—departed. I could tell more,—one servant got drunk three times in one day, one mashed the potatoes with kerosene, and so on,—but enough!

The men were almost worse. My experience was disastrous until I got James. One man, whose only duty was to look after my two horses, and carry a basket of clothes across a field once a week to mangle, left, after exhibiting most intense laziness, for the following sufficient reason:—He went for the basket of clothes, and brought some one else's.

'Very well; there it is, and I'll be d——d if I bring another. I'll leave first;' and so he did.

I followed, by accident, this man's career. He went to the diggings, and, notwithstanding his 'bone' idleness, was lucky. He next appeared in Sydney in broadcloth and jewels. He favoured public-houses and dancing-rooms with his company, and they favoured him, common, ugly-looking fellow though he was, for he must have had a good deal of money. Then he took

to being drunk in the day-time, and his jewellery diminished, his clothes became seedy, and the publicans favoured him with sundry hasty ejectments. Then he loafed in rags at street-corners; then he came begging to me and others; then he was picked up by the police, and died in the jail or infirmary.

Another man came in his place, very drunk, and I turned him out of the gate, over which we held afterwards a free fight, till I knocked him down into the road. After that the nearest public-house swallowed him as usual. Many more strange strangers had I. One asked me to drive while he lighted his pipe; another shook hands cordially on arrival, and left the horse and trap all night in the yard; another (with a wife engaged as cook) drove us to a small party, and being told to come at ten, had not arrived at eleven. I walked home to find him. Entering the gate, I found the house lighted up, the front door wide open, and the horse and buggy—lamps alight and all ready—wandering about the garden, the horse culling choice mouthfuls here and there. I entered and called; no answer. I opened the drawing-room door, and on the sofa, half drunk and fast asleep, lay man and wife locked in each other's arms. I kicked that man from the drawing-room through a long passage into the kitchen, where he danced round me theatrically for a while, after which he took in the horse and buggy. He had to visit a surgeon next day, and was thenceforth one of the best and steadiest men I have had. He has long held a place under the municipality, and raises his hat deferentially when he sees me to this day.

James himself was a queer experience. An old soldier (officer's servant), an old sailor (mess-room steward), a groom, a digger, an excellent housemaid, a first-class cook, and a rowdy Irishman, he was the most trustworthy, *un*reliable servant-man I ever had! He kept bachelor's house for myself and a friend once, for eighteen months, on the North Shore. We had no other servant. He made the beds, he kept the rooms clean as new pins, he pulled the boat across to Sydney, he groomed the horses, he cooked an excellent dinner and waited at table, fully costumed with white cotton gloves, afterwards. But occasionally he disappeared for four days, at the end of which time he would appeal penitently from the lock-up. He could not stand the near neighbourhood of a public-house, unless very fully occupied.

Once during my residence in Sydney he took the buggy into Sydney, to bring a professional friend who was to sing at a party we were giving. He went at 7 P.M. on Saturday. Horse, buggy, and man came home on Monday at 3 P.M., having spent the intervening period in jail. On another occasion James went on horseback to Sydney, to bring a leg of mutton for dinner (six o'clock). He had a basket for the mutton. He returned at about midnight without the basket, but with the mutton, he and the mutton each about an inch thick in mud. He had been seen to roll off his horse a score of times; but he got home, and held on to the mutton.

And still I kept him. How penitent he used to be! Several times I sent him away,—what good? Morning

after morning there he was in the stable, brushing away at the horses, scrubbing away at the harness, making everything as bright as a new pin. He didn't want any wages (and he *really* did *not;* he was an 'honest Irishman,' with a good heart, if ever there were one), only let him stay and be forgiven. I *had* to do it. There he stood, the great tears rolling down his dirty, ugly face; and I knew by many years' knowledge his honesty, ay, and his devotion to me; and how could I, no saint myself, though I *did* stop short of the watch-house, refuse him? Indeed, I did not want to do so.

He it was who accompanied me in my first—nay, in *all* but one—*serious* excursion into the 'great intarior,' as one of our legislators expressed it; and he was here to-day to ask for a recommendation as camp cook. When asked his age twenty years ago, he would say, 'About twenty;' *now* he says, 'Over sixty.'

My first bush experience of any magnitude came in consequence of instructions from England to make a careful examination of some property situated in that part of New South Wales called New England. It was near a range of hills or mountains, called the Liverpool Range, and was washed by one of the rivers arising in these mountains, the 'Talbragar.' This was in 1855 or 1856. I have often thought the whole affair one of the most extraordinary instances of ignorance at home of colonial matters which could possibly be imagined.

My instructions came from a large company, which had gone to the expense of sending out their chief officer, and establishing themselves in the Australias by the costly machinery of a separate directorate, etc. This

was not done, one would suppose, without inquiry and knowledge of the country they were coming to.

Now, in the far-away country I have mentioned, this company held a mortgage upon a large station. A splendid run it was, too, with an owner who is to-day very wealthy; but just then times had been bad, and prices of stock poor. At any rate, the company had the option of foreclosing, which would have been disastrous, or of renewing the mortgage, a perfectly safe thing to do. But before deciding, the directors in England wanted a report upon—what? There, in that then far-away, broken, trap-rock country, without roads other than mere bridle-tracks, without navigable water, without population, the nearest township twelve to twenty miles away, with some fifteen houses and a hundred inhabitants,—there, in this practically inaccessible spot, with no prospect of becoming other than a grazing country for fifty years to come, I was to examine the entire run, and report upon it, recommending the most likely places for establishing an extensive scheme of irrigation.

I was further to choose some special thousand acres, and report upon that more minutely, with plans and estimates, etc. The latest systems of irrigation were to be adopted upon this thousand acres, for the production of all kinds of cereals, vegetables, and fruits, to supply —whom? The hundred people at Cassillis, I suppose. But they had no difficulty in supplying themselves; indeed, this same river 'Talbragar' watered their soil also—the river in a more manageable condition, too, as being farther from the mountains. There was no other

market, and five days' jolting in drays would only lead to towns of a thousand people at most.

Such was supposed to be the importance of this scheme, however, that I was instructed to take with me another qualified person, that the company might have the benefit of two opinions. This was no easy task, responsible unoccupied civil engineers, ready to go this journey, being about as plentiful as blackberries in Australia, and there are none there. However, a gentleman, who afterwards made money in Queensland, turned up. He was recommended by one of our local directors. There was afterwards some little difficulty, for when we came to work he couldn't level. Now, as levelling was nearly all we had to do, it might have been serious. As it was, it didn't matter. I started with the foregone conclusion impressed upon me, that for the reasons above stated, as well, indeed, as the enormous cost of labour, it did not matter what I reported; and our local authorities knew that it did not.

However, we roped the springs of my four-wheeled dog-cart, packed it closely round with level-cases, gun-cases, and luggage, increasing our room by means of rope nettings, packed all on board the Hunter River steamer, and started one night, having with us a pair of staunch horses and James. We had an exceptionally smooth passage, and I was sick all the way: I always am. We arrived at Newcastle at four o'clock in the morning, before daylight, were landed on the wharf, and found there were no inns open; so we harnessed our horses and drove to Morpeth, arriving during the forenoon, but remaining all day there quite weary.

The Newcastle Railway was in progress, and the roads abominably cut up; at least I thought so, poor innocent that I was. I was guiltless of bush roads as yet. From Morpeth we went to Maitland, where was then a very good hotel. From Maitland to Singleton we went rejoicing—Phillips, James, and I. We left Singleton, and came to grief and to 'Grass Tree Hill' at the same time. The railway sweeps round Grass Tree Hill now, but then it was a notorious trap for man and horse, dray and bullock; a steep rise, which must be surmounted, covered by a deceitful coating of green, under which lay a depth of soil, loose and open, composed of disintegrated trap rock. Around this hill the traffic wound, always on a slope or 'sidling;' everywhere was the hill cut up by tracks, caused by the half-despairing efforts of drivers to lead their teams by new routes to the top. On all sides might be traced the deepening ruts as the dray wheels sank, until a yawning gap showed where the unassisted efforts of the bullocks had been unequal to the occasion, and the dray had been dug out, or, buried to the axle, stood motionless and tarpaulined, waiting for finer weather or a stronger team—the man left in charge stretched on his bed of sacking underneath, watching the efforts of others lazily—the bells of the rejoicing team tinkling in the distance. A little farther lay a dead horse or bullock, abandoned to its fate when exhausted nature refused further exertion, rotting in the hot sun; swarms of carrion birds rising and sailing slowly away into the still blue at our approach, the crows crying their strangely human and sneering note, 'Ah! ha! ha-a-a!' Millions of flies,

disturbed by nearer approach, surrounded us, alighting upon and defiling everything. They settled by hundreds upon the backs of the horses, making them a stirring mass of shining blackness. Busy ants, who have already 'spotted' their prey, follow each other at speed along their marked path from their distant hill, 7 feet in diameter and 5 feet high, hurrying back and forward intent upon sharing the spoil. Near by we see a broken and abandoned dray (probably the cause of death to the poor bullock), burying itself daily deeper into the yielding ground. There are remains of camp-fires everywhere, while away above and on either side distant sounds of strange oaths and cracking whips disturb the air, and indicate where labouring bullocks heavily respond to belabouring drivers.

Under the burning sun we toil painfully, our horses blown and weary, our united shoulders often to the wheel; but as yet we make progress, however slowly. At last—'Come, Nelly, good old lady, try again!' 'Click, click, click, crack, crack, crack,' as we shove the pair sharply to right or left to get out of the rut we have cut. Nelly is the new horse, a big, powerful, brown mare, obtained from Burt, 'regardless of cost,' and Nelly doesn't see it. She jibs a most decided jib. Persuasion, enforced by strongest whipcord, fails altogether; moreover, my comparatively small nugget, a chestnut, a hand under Nelly, who is doing wonders still, goes away at every crack of the whip. But she is getting fidgeted by the conduct of the brown, and strains upon everything with frantic jump. This will not do; she'll carry away something or 'burst' herself. We resolve to try

who has most patience, so we take the chestnut out. Then Nelly lies down. We take both out. Two o'clock; three o'clock; the sun shines hotter and hotter; the stifling air grows stiller; the hum of insects ceases, the cry of birds is stilled; the thirsty eucalyptus points its dry leaves earthward, and nature sleeps. We sleep too, soundly after that brandy-and-water, and the cud of sweet and bitter fancies, which was all we had to eat.

'Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle!' 'Oggle, goggle, goggle!' 'Oggle, goggle, oggle!' 'Ha! ha! ha!' I open my eyes, and the 'chuckle,' etc., greets me all around. I look about me, and the sun flashes into my eyes. It seems I had chosen the shade of a great gum-tree two hours ago to sleep under, but the treacherous sun has stolen round and is shedding his full rays upon me. How hot and disagreeable it all is! But that awful row is going on still. I look up, and see half-way up the great gum-tree an immense, ugly brute, clinging with outspread claws to the bark. It is a great iguana, the largest I have ever seen. He must be 5 feet long. What is he doing there? Round him flutter the 'laughing jackasses,' vermin destroyers sacred to sportsmen, and 'death upon snakes.' At him darts presently one of these absurd birds, his great, thick, horny bill extended, whilst his companions screech with laughter. A flutter of wings, the iguana's head is raised with wide-open mouth, and the bird is off. He has had a drive at the poor, harmless, nauseous-looking iguana with his bill. The latter, respited, rushes higher up the tree, turning somewhat round the trunk as he goes. Fool! why does not he

make tracks down the trunk and find shelter on the ground? But he does not take any such course. Perhaps his only defence is to hold on; the birds might make a combined attack during the few seconds occupied in his descent, and do him to death. Another demoniac chorus, and another jackass goes through the same attack. The iguana makes the same defence, if it is one, and no more. He may be trying to bite, certainly, but his tactics are a mystery to me. The combat deepens, and suddenly down falls the poor, ill-fated iguana to the earth. The jubilant chorus of asses awakes my companions, who shout aloud, and the jeerers retire to a farther tree. It is too late, for it is all over with the iguana.

Bless us, five o'clock! What must we do? Camp here? That will never do, so we start again. The chestnut does it all, for Nelly is as sulky as ever. Alone she draws the lot at steady intervals to within two hundred yards of the top; and she would have done that too, but a sympathizing teamster, who has been for some time watching her struggles admiringly, interferes. 'No, no, little lady,' he says; 'by ——, I can't stand this any longer; why, you'll kill yourself, old woman. Wait a bit, chaps, will you?' He brings a couple of powerful draught horses, we take the mare out, and putting the two at work, reach the summit with but two rests. We thank him, and he says, 'I did not do it for you, no fear; but I know a good 'un when I see her, and I won't see her "bested," if I know it.'

We entered Muswellbrook when the gentle, westerly

land breeze was cooling the parched earth—near midnight, I suppose. This midnight entry was about the best excuse for our morrow's absurdity. Muswellbrook was then but a small place, as remote townships are. It is large now, and the railway brings it into close communication with—everywhere. The inn was opposite the court-house, the court-house was opposite the inn; there were a couple of public-houses, a church or two, a store or two, a house or two, and that was all.

The accommodation was good, and, late as it was, we were well entertained. Morning broke dull and cloudy, rain not being far off. We started late, receiving the usual bush instructions to take the 'only marked road'—there never *is* more than one; but our well-defined road branched away ere two miles were done into half a dozen at least. We knew our general direction, and, had the sun shone, we could have steered in the right line at least. But the threatening dulness increased as the day wore on, and we met never a soul to guide us.

At noon, or thereabout, we came to a running streamlet, where we halted for high noon camp, generally a two hours' spell. First of all, horses are released and led away to water; then hobbled, given a small feed of corn, and left to pick up as much green food as they can get. Meanwhile, one of the party is collecting small twigs, and planting them to leeward of the wind, against some convenient stump, to form the nucleus of a fire. This is lighted, and larger wood added. The fire burns up, and a log is dragged to it. The end is placed upon the fire, and you have a blaze for a day or

two if you want it. Next, the tin bucket is unhooked from under the trap, water brought in it, and the full quart pot put upon the fire. The water soon boils, and then a handful or two of tea is thrown in, and a couple of great spoonfuls of ration sugar (just escaped from being treacle) added. All being well stirred together, a pint pannikin full is served out to each two, or a half-pint to each if you are squeamish and have pannikins enough; a junk of salt beef, and the remains of your morning's damper, together with a tin plate and knife to each, are added, and you fall to. Those who have travelled in the wild bush of almost any country know how jolly all this is, and those who have *not* so travelled never will know until they do. Then a pipe, a luxurious stretch under a gum-tree's shade,—which shade might be deeper, by the bye,—and it is time to harness up and be off again. Sometimes we vary our lazy half-hour by a 'bogy' or headlong plunge into water, if there is a sufficient stream at hand, from which we emerge refreshed; sometimes by a shot at wild duck or turkey, bronze-winged pigeon or the like. But the normal condition is the siesta. To-day, however, we require no shade of gum-tree, for there is no sun, and the air is rather chilly. However, we enjoy our feed, and are the sooner ready to set off again.

We calculate that, having made good progress all day, we shall arrive at our destination somewhere about four P.M., and rattle along merrily. At four P.M. comes down a drizzling rain, but we sight no 'destination.' At five it rains harder; at six and at seven it is the same.

We are wet, chilled, and dispirited now, and know that we must have lost our way. Eight o'clock is very near, and although it is midsummer, darkness is threatening, and we have unpleasant anticipations of a night in the rain; our horses, too, flag, and require urging to go on at all. Suddenly they prick up their ears, shake themselves together, communicate to one another, by an approximate movement of their heads, their mutual opinions, and rattle on sharply. *We* know that *they* know something; but it may be only water, and *we* don't want that, we have quite enough of it already. But presently the clearing widens, and our now willing horses increase their pace. Yes; an inn and a few houses, thank goodness! But, gracious! a stone building with pillared front and an alcove, a swinging sign opposite!

No wonder the confounded horses knew it! We are back, after a fifty miles' drive at the least, at Mudgee, from which we started in the morning. We are comforted by the information, coolly conveyed, that people often make the same mistake, the fact of the one track only notwithstanding. But we make the best of it, wonderfully soothed by the reflection that we are not travelling at our own expense, no doubt. Next day, too, our horses are knocked up, shoes wrong, and altogether unfit to travel.

At last we start, in the right track this time. Somewhat similar, but very enjoyable and invigorating, is our daily drive of thirty to forty miles; every evening being spent at a hostelry, large or small, but mostly

clean and comfortable. The road was at that time the great squatting line. Now all is altered. A squatter, who used to have his carriage and pair, and take a week or ten days to Newcastle, making right merry at the recognised resting-places by the way, now takes his best horse, rides his fifty, sixty, or one hundred miles in one day, leaves his horse for a week's spell, takes the train to Newcastle, finds the roaring steamer awaiting him, and is in Sydney next morning at daybreak, returning in similar fashion when his business or pleasure is done.

The march of improvement has destroyed, here as elsewhere, those pleasant resting-places, the roadside inns, whose successors, where there are any, reek with stuffy rooms, low ceilings, and night companions. Of course, as one got off the beaten track, and made for this or that unaccustomed place, the state of things just described existed then also, perhaps even worse. This was our case on leaving the great Northern Road in order to reach Cassillis. We came across a very inferior public-house, built of American pine, with very small rooms, very low ceilings, very little window, and insufferably close and hot. What I could do with my bedroom to freshen it I did, by widely opening doors and windows, but the heat was still suffocating. We dined, and perspired; we had tea, and perspired; we went to bed bathed in perspiration. I was weary, and put out my light in hopes of speedy oblivion. But soon I found myself attacked by so many enemies that I was forced to capitulate. I took my 'possum rug to the verandah, and got a little sleep there. I was innocent of a bedroom

for three months after that. Next morning we went to the village store, and bought sufficient calico to make three tents six feet by four feet, and four feet high at the sides, rising to six feet at the summit or ridge-pole. The calico was then cut to pattern by James, in the capacity of old salt, and the tents made.

CHAPTER IX.

CAMPING OUT IN THE BUSH.

Tent Life—A Dangerous Crossing—A Wonderful Instinct—Our Camp on the Talbragar—Some of the Disadvantages of Camp Life—A Storm—Threatened Inundation—Journey across Country—A Station and a 'Tramps' Hovel'—A Spell at the Diggings—The Temptations of Bush Life—Return to Sydney—An Explosion—The Loss of the *Dunbar*.

THE making of the tents occupied two days, during which time we non-sewers lounged about, and called upon our squatter, a very pleasant gentleman, recently married. He asked us to dinner for the following day, and we were very glad of it, for we had seen a lady, a drawing-room, and a piano. Now that night and the next morning it rained heavily where we were, and harder yet on 'the range.' The insignificant little river Talbragar, which we could at dusk skip over dry-shod, rapidly filled; the water came rushing down with a roar amongst the round boulders, with a head three feet high or so to begin with, and by morning the little stream was, in technical parlance, 'a banker,' tearing down at a rate of six or eight miles an hour, and bearing great trees on its waters, now ten feet deep at the least, and forty feet across from bank to bank.

Our host's house was on one side of this river, our inn on the other. The river was utterly unfordable; but some half-way between the township and the squatter's house, a good-sized tree spanned the abyss, having probably fallen across the stream and then been assisted into its present position. By this tree we had crossed and re-crossed yesterday, and by it we must cross to-day, if we intend to dine with our host. But the crossing is a very different matter to-day. Yesterday we could have descended the banks on either side, crossed dry-shod, and ascended on the other side without difficulty. We had preferred crossing the log 'for fun,' but it was no fun now. The bark was slippery with the rain, although the rain itself had ceased, and the river was tearing along close underneath it. We crossed safely, nevertheless, were treated hospitably, and enjoyed ourselves. When the time came for returning, we began to think rather nervously of the river. The night was pitch dark, and a drizzling rain had recommenced. We arrived at the river bank, but we could not find the log, and we wandered about disconsolately. At last, 'Hallo! Phillips, here it is!' I walk along it carelessly in my pleasure at having found it, smoking my cigar the while. Suddenly I slip—into the foaming torrent? Not quite that yet, but very near it. Had it been so, nothing could have given me a chance! I must have been carried away and drowned. I had arrived at a forked branch, and the main tree suddenly thinning, I had trodden too much on one side and fallen. Fortunately I was able to catch the smaller branch. There I hung, feet and legs indeed in the water. I made

several ineffectual efforts to regain the log, and then began to see my great danger. I almost lay upon the water, holding fast to the branch, and calling loudly to Phillips to come and help me. For answer I received shouts of laughter, hysterical, I daresay, but not reassuring. By a last—and I knew it was a last—great effort, I got one leg over the smaller branch; then, after resting a while in comparative security, I got on to the log and crawled to shore. When there, I found that I had my cigar still alight between my teeth. I was safe, but my cabbage-tree hat was gone. Now *I* had the best of the situation.

Mr. Phillips was no longer laughing; he was much more nearly crying. He 'dared not come over alone,' he said, and implored me to come and help him. Never a word I answered, but marched off to the inn. Phillips arrived next morning with a bad cold, but no word ever passed between us concerning that adventure. How about the cabbage-tree hat which I had lost?

On the night of my return to the public-house, I was a sort of hero. I was a hero to the landlord on account of my intimacy with the squatter, by whom he chiefly lived, and to his followers because they *were* his followers, I suppose. There was much noisy talk concerning the little story of the log. A blind black fellow was a hanger-on at the inn, and a very useful one too. His occupation was that of groom and water-carrier. He had chief charge of the stables, and entire charge of the well. This well was in a paddock across the road, through a gateway and down a field. The well was open; to get water, a bucket must be lowered into it by

a loose rope, drawn up again, and carried off, up the paddock, through the gate, along and across the road, round by the back of the house, to the yard or to the stables as the case might be. This black fellow never made a mistake. I often wondered why he never fell into the well. One wrong step would have finished him, but he went backwards and forwards with the bold step of a clear-sighted man. The horses—strange horses too—never seemed to kick at or fear him either. Now this Jackey and I had struck up a fast friendship. I gave him grog or tobacco, and he told me stories. Standing among the 'mob' to hear my hat story, he quietly said, 'I suppose him at "Crooked-nose Bend."' Crooked-nose Bend was, I found, about half a mile down the river, and no one knew why Jackey should have fancied the place. However, he quietly slipped out, and presently returned with the hat, saying, 'Me get him in a minnit.' *How* he got it none knew, but he seemed to think nothing of the feat, whilst I thought it almost a miracle.

We left this spot after a day or two, and arrived upon our camping ground after a rough drive of some twelve miles over a rocky range. The ground was a wide level plain, with the Talbragar in the centre. The plain sloped easily from the river to the mountains. The soil was deep, rich, loose, black trap, crumbling and cracked into fissures, ten feet deep in places. The entire plain was covered with thick grass, six to eight feet high, every stem separate, and each head, perhaps, six inches long. A compact mass of flies literally bowed down these heads, and as we brushed through, they rose in such

numbers as almost to blind us, whilst our poor horses were terribly tortured. As we approached the river, there was, however, a marked difference. The flies were, for some unknown reason, comparatively few. Perhaps they preferred to be away from the breeze from the mountain which so often follows the water.

Clearly this was our destination, this great plain of deep alluvial soil, backed by mountains and with a river in the centre. There were plenty of places, too, in the hills for small reservoirs. So we chose as well as we could among that long grass a bit of rising ground on the plain, sufficiently near the river for convenience of water, and high enough to be out of the reach of probable floods. The very first thing to be done was to provide against *fire*, for if any part of that great sea of grass had become ignited we could not have hoped to escape—unless into the river, with the loss of all our goods. We went to work, and after some hours of labour had cleared a circle of about two feet wide enclosing our hillock of about an acre in extent. Carefully we lighted the inner circumference of this ring all round, keeping under any attempt of the fire to burn outwards, and soon we had a blackened area of ground at our disposal. When this had cooled down, we brought our trap, horses, etc., into the centre of it. The ashes blackened everything, but we could not help that. In a very few days we had a fine green sward all round us. The plain was free from timber, save a tree here and there on the river bank, and I saw neither snake nor centipede whilst there. To draw the dog-cart under a tree, cover it from the sun and our food from

the crows, was our next care. Then we dragged a log or two to the camp by means of the horses, after which we made our fire, boiled a 'billy,' fried a rasher from our side of bacon, and had tea. By this time it was dark, and we were glad to lie down and sleep on dog-cart cushions and rugs. This was my first real camp-out, sleeping simply under heaven's canopy. There is, I think, a feeling about this first experience which long prevents sleep. It is an oppressive feeling of awe at the grandeur of the 'noble firmament on high,' at the solitude and stillness, while yet there is a raising of the mind at this new illustration of being alone with God which shuts out small thoughts.

The 'new chum' is usually confused by the situation; a sort of feeling that he is some great traveller of whom he has read by the home fireside possesses him, or else he fancies that he is in a prolonged dream. Can this be he who never before spent a night out of bed, save when, perhaps, dancing the hours away between strong walls and under a sound roof? But morning comes at last, and he finds that he has been very fast asleep, that his rug and whiskers are damp with the night dew, and that he is very chilly; so he gets up. As he has slept in all his clothes, his toilette is not elaborate. He shivers, thrusts his hands deep into his pockets, and wanders yawning towards the fire, last night so bright and glowing, now a mockery of smouldering blackness. As he listlessly spreads his fingers over it, another gaping figure approaches; together they cower over the embers, feeding them with stray twigs escaped from last night's burning, speaking but little the

while. But presently the fire blazes up; more hands tend it. All are awake and bustling now: one is 'fixing' the fire with knowing hand, another arranging knives and pannikins on convenient stump, fetching water, slicing damper and salt junk—all are busy.

The landscape brightens eastward; the pink glows into golden-tinted coral; next the big sun, magnified to twice his ordinary size, shows his bloated forehead above the horizon, and presently looms blood-red through the misty morning air. The travellers take all in, and the initiated say one to another, 'Another sweltering day for us.' Then the birds are at it, high in air, their pure white feathers glinting in the early sunlight. A great flock of white cockatoos come on with noisy screech, wheeling and flashing as they discuss what settler's ripening corn shall suffer to-day.

Listen to those glossy old black crows, seated together in distant tree, or lazily sailing along overhead, discoursing sagely, with many an eloquent interjection, as to our preparations for breakfast. Sweetly come the notes of the magpie, hopping with long strides over the green, stopping anon with head aside to scrutinize, then off again with bright, cheerful whistle, matching the morning's freshness. The climbing sun touches the dull river, which forthwith sparkles out into rippling welcome to the daylight; whilst o'er his bosom flashes a painted beauty, now green, now gold, hastening hither and thither in search of breakfast—a brilliant kingfisher.

The sun is higher now, and looks himself again; it is half-past five, and the air is warm already. Breakfast is over, we whistle instead of shivering, and all is blithe

and merry in the first sweet hours of an Australian summer's morning. We cannot, however, pass them altogether in whistling. Breakfast done, we travellers must first pitch our tents. For this purpose we must seek the hills for poles. Choosing and cutting our saplings, we make the horses draw them down. For each tent we bring two upright saplings with forked ends; these we fix firmly in the ground six feet apart, the forks facing each other six feet above ground. Then the ridge-pole, seven feet long, is laid upon these, projecting six inches at either end. Over this are thrown the tents, stretched out, and pegged into the ground at short distances. We thus have a tent six feet long, six feet high in the centre, and four feet wide. The house is complete, save a trench round the outside to lead away the rain. A simple contrivance with forked poles about a foot above ground, joined together with rope, from which canvas is stretched, forms a sufficiently comfortable hammock. This is, of course, luxurious camping-out, and can only be resorted to when, as in our case, one intends to remain in the same place for some time.

By the time we have done all this, night is upon us, and we have finished a harder day's work than we look to do again. Scant is our supper, but sound our sleep. Now a stretcher is very comfortable if you are tired out, and a tent is better than the open. Still, a tent six feet long and four feet wide is a small apartment, wherein solely to reside and to stow your belongings. Your bed is large in comparison to your house, and you are apt to press your head against your canvas or calico

wall at the back, or push your feet outside the door in front. Your carpet-bag, general belongings, and removed clothing exhibit themselves, meanwhile, generally from under the side walls of the building. All is very tolerable in fine weather, albeit your silk shirt and underthings do stick to you clammily after exposure to the night dews. But when it rains, when your head absorbs plentiful moisture from its resting-place, when the slackened sides of your tent flap against you in the wind, when from the roof a constant drizzle descends upon you, it is by no means pleasant. To dress in saturated garments is decidedly disagreeable; and a day spent in dampness by the camp-fire, burning on one side, shivering on the other, and inhaling great draughts of wood smoke as the fickle wind veers about, is rather a penance. Nor is bed-time enticing.

Then one finds out the value of wild animals. Skins, in such a case, are invaluable. To be the possessor of a couple of good rugs of native bear-skin is to be dry and warm whatever happens. Few illnesses result from these wettings, and when fine weather comes again all is forgotten. We had on this, my first trip, but *three* days of really bad weather, and one night. The three days came together; the night came by itself, and brought an incident.

Mr. Phillips was not a good bushman. He did not take things easily; he fretted and fidgeted himself and others. I think he was not very robust, and little daily hardships irritated him. He would have his tent pitched under a tree which we others carefully avoided,—James, because he was an old bushman, and I, because of the

stories I had heard of falling dead branches. However, what shade there was from an old tree, with little foliage, during the heat of the day, he got; but he had to pay for it.

One afternoon the clouds banked up heavily on the not distant range; the thunder roared and lightning flashed in the distance. The Talbragar murmured, and its waters came rolling down more rapidly, rising against the banks. Then came with a rush a muddy torrent, with a head of some two feet. It was raining heavily somewhere 'up there.' We had no wind, but a light scud, seemingly detached from the heavier clouds, began to drive towards us fast. Whilst we were watching, night closed upon us. Presently a fierce wind blew wildly out of the mountain and whistled round us. There was no rain yet, however. Then the storm broke; the bright lightning and roaring thunder soon brought a deluge of heavy raindrops and great hailstones. The tempest passed, and the rain ceasing for a moment, gave us time to hear the tumultuous rush of the mad river, now no doubt a 'banker.' Again the rain poured down harder than ever, and the wind came on with ever-increasing violence. Still everything stood. James and I had long since turned out. Phillips would not. We were standing by the great fire we had made, wrapped in whatever we had of rugs. What with the howl of the wind, the patter of the rain, and the roar of the Talbragar, we could hardly hear ourselves speak.

We were up because we were afraid of that river. The great plain we were upon was half a mile broad on either side, and we were but some hundred yards or so from the

stream, and barely a few feet above its banks. What if it should overflow and flood the plains? We had been to it several times already, and it was unpleasantly near the top of its banks; so we were watching it for our lives, or something like it. The gale carried great lumps of blazing wood from our fire amongst the beaten-down grass. We were not afraid of fire now, however. Our horses had come in and stood near us, tails to wind. All this time Phillips lay shivering in his bed. We could just make out his favourite tree waving and rocking over his head, throwing out its arms wildly, and showering little pieces all around.

It should have been moonlight, and some dull anti-darkness enabled us to see for a considerable distance when accustomed to the storm. A heavier gust than ever tore down upon us; a loud snap, a something whirring through the air, a dull thud, and Mr. Phillips' tent succumbs and prostrates itself!

Reader, have you ever enveloped a kitten in a handkerchief, a puppy in a tablecloth, or a two-year-old baby in a sheet? What happens then, happened now. A heaving up and down of a confused mass of white, a scratching and struggling, accompanied by smothered cries for help. We had but time to stare at one another, when the frail fastenings of the tent gave way, and a figure also in white crawled out. This was Phillips in his night-shirt. He leapt up, and, still screaming, took to flight at racing speed down the soaking plain. Now we ought to have helped him, but really the sight was too ludicrous, and coming as a reaction upon our wearied and anxious watch, we could not stand it.

My only excuse is that James began it. He burst into such an irrepressible shout of laughter as was irresistible. I followed suit immediately, and there we stood, or stooped, or rolled, watching the retreating figure and shouting aloud. Even to this day I must have ten minutes to spare ere I venture upon the story of that night with James. But Phillips began to realize the fact that he was still alive, perhaps that he was chilly; at any rate, ere distance swallowed him from our admiring gaze, he stopped, and began to return slowly, his one garment driven unpityingly against him by the gale, its cold soaked folds clinging to his form. I offered him warm wrappers, but could not do it gravely. James had retired behind the dog-cart, whence his guffaws were audible at intervals. Phillips declined all assistance, and stood by the fire until James managed to rig up his tent again somehow or other. I think that destructive blast was the heaviest. At least, we were all quietly asleep at a late hour for us, the next morning. When I went down to the river, the treacherous thing was murmuring deliberately along, as though nothing whatever had happened.

Our work lasted long, and became painfully monotonous. Up at first glimmer of dawn—at work at four-thirty—traversing, levelling on the backbone of the hills until about nine o'clock, then taking our perspiring course back to camp—making up books, etc. during the heat of the day under a tree by the river-side, or lolling with a novel in our open tents. An hour or two with the gun in the evening; a shot at a turkey or pigeon on the plains, or a duck, maybe, on the river, and so to

bed, when all was still save the clank of the hobbles as the horses came wandering round the camp, seeking companionship, or maybe maize, if haply their morning feed might be nosed out from anywhere.

There was one disturber of the night, however. A brute of an opossum would take nightly station upon the ridge-pole of my tent, where he grunted discordantly, until I shot him through the calico. We were greatly plagued by crows. They stole everything that was left about for even a few minutes. One night we shot a plump duck, and James hung it ready for cooking on the ridge-pole of his tent. Next morning at daybreak, I heard the sound of swooping wings very close to the tents, accompanied by jubilant ha-ha's! At last I got up to inquire about it, and was just in time to see the shining black back of a great crow sailing safely away with our duck, which he had detached from its string under the very tent of its proprietor.

Work finished, we prepared for a start. We had decided to strike across country to Mudgee, thence to Bathurst, and so to the Sofala diggings, where, under James' guidance, we were to take a three days' holiday, and try our luck at digging. I do not think Phillips was sorry to leave; I do not think it ever occurred to James to think about it; but I, at least, left that plain and river with regret. I like roughing it; I like bush life; I admire nature in every aspect, and we had seen many changes even on our broad plain. Our tents stood now upon a fresh bright green, and we had quite a little garden of creepers and quickly-growing flowers, which had shot up in that rich ground marvellously

during our three months' stay. We had books to read, damper and salt junk, as also a side of bacon, to eat, the clear river before our doors from which to drink, and no care. A visit to Cassillis by James on horseback brought us luxuries,—potted fruits, meats, sardines, from the store, together with tobacco and a bottle of brandy. I know I passed those weeks right happily. My chief employment seems now to have been going about carolling, 'I care for nobody, no, not I, for nobody cares for me,' until I must have been a nuisance to my companions. By the way, we had a care once, for, sending James to Cassillis to replenish the larder, he took three days about it, during which we were 'fair clammed,' as my Yorkshire friends have it. He returned remarkably dirty, very penitent, and not quite sober.

So we struck tents and departed, drinking a good-bye as we crossed the river, and made tracks—the literal meaning, I suppose, of travelling where no tracks already are—for Mudgee. We travelled deliberately, making many a detour, and heading many a stream, but generally keeping almost due south. We pitched our tents at night, when we found camping-ground, early enough; slept in our rugs at other times.

One evening we came to a river. The sky had been all day heavy and overcast, but no rain had fallen as yet with us, though on the mountains it seemed to be raining hard. The banks of this stream were cut deep into the ground, and were very steep, and the course looked as if there must be a rapid torrent in storm times. The approaches to and from the ford were very dangerous, but we were quite used to 'chancing it,' and

we jolted over somehow. Even as we crossed we heard the roar of coming water, the noise increasing momentarily. In a few minutes down it came, rushing along the pent-up channel with a head at least four feet high. In half an hour the river was a banker, having risen twenty-five or thirty feet. We could not have crossed ten minutes later than we did. Then the rain began.

Happily, as we turned away from the stream, we found ourselves at a well-known out-station. Here, besides other primitive erections, was a small cottage. It had at one time been occupied by a 'super,'[1] but he had removed, and it had long been untenanted. The stockman in charge lent us this cottage, so that we might be by ourselves, instead of planting us amongst the numerous other visitors. We must have sheltered somewhere, for it was now raining hard. We paid for our exclusiveness, however.

The place where the stockman did *not* put us was a tramp's house. Now, as this was a relic of a recognised institution among hospitable squatters, I will describe it. A large slab hut stood in the yard, open to all comers; it was furnished with a rough centre bush table, and had a tier of bunks all round it. Into this marched, as a thing of course, numerous tramps and travellers of all sorts,—it was very full on this night, owing to the threatened rain,—each comer in his turn choosing his bunk, and throwing his 'swag' into it. Here he stayed till morning, or longer in bad weather.

In earlier times it had been the custom, I believe, to serve out rations to all comers. This custom was still

[1] Colonial abbreviation for superintendent, squatter's *alter ego*.

partially kept up here. A great log fire blazed away outside to cook at. I am told that far in the interior, in some parts of Riverina, for instance, this hospitality is kept up yet, but there hardly seems an alternative in places so remote. Tramps *will* come, houseless and penniless, and if not helped they must die. Indeed, a regular business is said by the squatters to be carried on by some incorrigible idlers, who tramp the district, partaking of the fare given at this place and that, and are clamorous against their shabby treatment by some of their hosts. I am told that some of these men are quite well known and looked for—expected, that is, *not* wanted. But it is an unfair tax upon the squatters, and would soon, in the populous country, have become ruinous, especially after the diggings were found, so that it has in most places become a thing of the past.

Of course we were thankful to escape this society, but indeed we paid for it. The cottage was *alive* with fleas, *thick* with them, indeed. The rain lasted two days, and the fleas nearly devoured us. Sleep was impossible. We lived all day in the verandah, wet and uncomfortable, and at night we faced our enemies. James amused us even here. He sewed himself up in sacking, and sewed up innumerable fleas at the same time. After that he was helpless.

The second day after we left this station saw us enter Mudgee. That second day was very nearly being the last day for us all. The drive was a long one, but we had almost a dead level all the way, with smooth bowling-green turf to drive over, in and out among

great old trees, standing from ten to thirty or more yards apart. This was what is called 'forest land,' open and without underbrush, and a man may well believe he is driving through an endless outer park. The trees were immense gums, much larger than any near the coast, splendid monarchs of the 'forest.' The grass was green and luxuriant after the late rains, and we rattled along merrily, taking a long spell for midday 'yoho' (English navvy's term) by a wide, shallow stream, and wandering at will through the great park. Off we went again, refreshed by our long rest. It was very hot, the sun was blazing down powerfully, and the earth sent up a vapour bath after its saturation. We drove close under a grand old tree, a white gum of great size. We were quite underneath it, when it saluted us with a loud boom like a cannon shot. Off started the astonished horses at racing pace; the tree, meanwhile, sliced itself in two by a straight diagonal cut some seven or eight feet from the ground, and came crashing headlong down, hurling big boughs around in every direction, and enveloping us in a thick shower of smaller pieces. I had enough to do to hold the horses, though they *were* on a journey, and had gone forty miles that day. Most surely the sudden fright of the horses saved us all by that two or three yards of distance.

Then we came to Mudgee. After our three months' bushing, it seemed like arriving at some European capital. The half-dozen loafers round the inn door were a formidable mob, the house a palace of luxury, and the bottled beer nectar. Never before was such a dinner put before a traveller as that which our host

served up at six o'clock. It included soup, fish, roast beef, turkey, wild duck, tarts, pudding, and Gruyère cheese, champagne, claret, and cigars ; and we had been living for months on salt beef, or salter bacon, and damper! Never have I seen Mudgee since ; but I am prepared to stake heavy sums that it has, or had, finer houses, finer poultry, better cooks, better wines, and a smoother billiard-table than any other town in Christendom you can mention.

We made Sofala 'promiscuous,' as the people said ; in fact, we missed our way, and arrived at the top of a very steep hill, at the bottom of which ran the 'Turon,' on the farther side of which lay Sofala. But we were by no means to be stopped by the hill or the river. Down that hill we came, one hanging on to each horse's head, the horses mostly on their haunches, one hanging on behind ; and thus we slid down, coming with a rush into the river, which was, fortunately, low and fordable. So we crossed with a struggling gallop, up the abrupt farther bank, into the main street, whilst much of the town turned out to see. After this we drove up to the inn in a sort of triumph. Three days we spent in a pretty little valley known to James, where were plentiful remains of diggers, in the shape of abandoned shafts, etc., a clear stream running through the middle of the ground,—three days which I thoroughly enjoyed, and during which I got a homœopathic bottle of gold, weighing, say, half an ounce. During these three days I quarrelled almost eternally with Phillips, who gave it up after washing out one dishful of dirt, and was for breaking our agreement and going on. When I

would not, he was for taking one of the horses and riding into Bathurst, which I most distinctly forbade. Then he was going to walk, but did not; nor did he try his luck at digging any more, but lay all day discontentedly under a gum-tree. And so in four days we saw Sydney once more, and sorry was I that the trip was over.

Much has been said, much virtuous indignation expressed, at the undoubted recklessness with which bushmen 'knock down' their money when they get it. But they continue to do it, and no wonder; the wonder would be if they did not. The sudden change from the dreary monotony of a solitary bush life to a town, however small it may seem to us,—a town with its people, shops, life, dissipation,—is enough to turn stronger heads than those of half our 'hermits of the plains.' Even to walk the streets after dark, midst gaslight and movement, is a positive luxury; and if this be so to those whose time of solitude has been short, as ours had been, what must it be to the far-away shepherd, absolutely alone for twelve months at a time, with the same wearying, monotonous task of following sheep at the rate of two miles an hour all day? What can it be but a seventh heaven of delight to him, after so long, to lounge at the bar of a public-house, albeit but a bush shanty, to receive the alcoholic homage of his fellows, to 'shout' (treat) bad beer or worse rum to all around him, and to splutter and jabber over the splashed and dirty counter, and sing his drunken, endless songs as he knocks down his cheque?

And when the earnings of a year are gone in a

short week, when his parasites leave him, and his benevolent landlord gives him that last glass of rum, and turns him forth to work through or die under his '*D. T.*' alone in the wilds, is he so much worse off than before? Is he so much worse off than that other shepherd who does *not* knock his cheque down, but stays in the bush with his flock, until silence and sameness drive him mad in his turn? But ordinarily, excess will lead to excess, reaction *must* follow upon monotony; and so long as excessive misery and unnatural solitude are the bush-shepherd's unnatural although necessary lot, so long will any ordinary man yield with joyous readiness to an opposite excess. Improve the quality of the poison given him at present under the name of 'drink,' improve the character and conduct of his entertainers; for if he cannot get good liquor he will take bad, if he cannot find reputable entertainers he will go to disreputable ones. His cash will burn his pocket, and he will knock his 'cheque down whether or no.

What does his master do? He has more discretion, certainly, and the bad white spirit has little temptation for him; but he has not been alone for twelve months, although he is pining for excitement. He has had his brandy-and-water daily, perhaps a good deal of it; he has had none of the solitude and hardship of his poor shepherd; he has had his 'super,' his stockmen, his horses, his dogs for company, and an occasional scamper across country to that other station, where he has made a night of it, perhaps two. He has had his fresh meats, milk and butter, vegetables and potted luxuries daily;

and yet what does *he* do? He knows better than to be 'stuck' at the first 'sly grog-shop,' or even the first township of a dozen houses and a hundred people. No; he makes his way to the capital, Sydney or Melbourne, puts up at his club, and has his month out royally. Of course, this case of the squatter is less universal than that of the shepherd, because he has higher education and more rational resources, besides the wide difference in temptation; but it is frequent enough, too. Moreover, many a lonely man has borne through it all bravely, but he must generally have some overruling taste or habit which takes much of the sting out of his position, some master-passion which has controlled all else.

I think it was soon after my return from this journey that a circumstance worthy of brief mention happened,—a mere nothing, doubtless, to those braves who lead forlorn hopes, fire mines and counter-mines, blow up Delhi gates, and so on, but startling enough to a civilian calmly digesting his dinner. I think, mind you, that even heroes might be startled at so sudden an interruption to a peaceful moment. I was seated in the easiest of chairs in the verandah of my cottage, at three o'clock or thereabouts, one peaceful, bright Sunday afternoon; all was very still, excepting the jangle of what are popularly known here as 'John Campbell's bells.' My verandah overlooked a longish garden, terminating at O'Connel Street; beyond O'Connel Street was vacant ground; beyond that the new Exchange, then Pitt Street; after Pitt Street, 'Chaos,' represented, when I sat down at 2.45, by some new warehouses, half hidden by the new

Exchange. I smoked; I looked up from my book and saw a clear blue sky, a bright Sunday afternoon. I read on; I looked again,—heavens and earth! the bright blue sky is alive with roofs of houses, stacks of chimneys, beams of timber, walls, floors. Now comes a roar which shakes me violently in my seat; windows crack and slates whizz around me. I stare on stupidly. The great masses, high in air, slowly turn and separate piecemeal as they take their downward course. Presently a continuous crashing noise marks when they fall on roof or ground. Dashing through the garden and over all obstacles, I rush into the middle of a great cloud of dust. I am the fourth on the ground, I find. But there is nothing to be done. 'Is any one hurt?' 'No.' A boy puts in a pallid appearance. He was the only person near. It was 4 P.M. Sunday, remember; on any other day the streets would have been crowded; and although the debris fell all round this boy, nothing had struck him. 'Any one *in* the buildings?' No one could tell. The dust cleared off, the site of the warehouses only remained. The cause of it all was a shipment of nitro-glycerine, which had accompanied innocent passengers on a three months' voyage, and been carted to the warehouses a few days before. It doesn't matter; handsomer warehouses occupy that site to-day, and the windows and roofs are all mended.

Life resumed its routine for a while, soon to be dispelled by a sad tragedy, which in circumstances of horror could hardly be surpassed. I speak of the long-to-be-remembered loss of the *Dunbar*, which

many here mourn to this day. The *Dunbar* was a favourite passenger-ship plying regularly between London and Sydney. She belonged to an old-established line of 'fashionable' ships. On her last trip she left England with a full complement of passengers, bearing home again the wives and families, sisters and brothers, of many an anxious colonist; she was full, indeed, of well-known names and faces. Their run was prosperous, and the voyage was thought to be over. To-morrow she would be in the smooth waters of Port Jackson, and the long-pined-for kiss of love could be given.

Alas! to-morrow she had vanished from the face of the waters, and every living soul she carried, with one exception, had been lost. That one saved was a sailor, who had no tale to tell—who hardly knew the passengers even by sight! He only knew that he was keeping his watch; that the look-out shouted 'Breakers ahead!' that he looked up and saw the frowning headland towering right over them; that he ran up the jib and leaped, the boatswain following; that he landed in a cleft in the cliff; that the boatswain fell short; that he looked round into the darkness, and there was *nothing* to be seen. He heard no cry, saw no wreck; the dash of the stormy sea against that rock-bound coast had completed everything ere he had time to think.

Ashore it was a wild night; the heavy, shifting southerly gale—the terror of this coast—was blowing hard, but this sailor seemed to say that on that great ship they hardly felt it. Of course, it was *with* them.

That sailor's story ends with his being taken off the rocks after two days' exposure on a few feet of slippery footing, and his being taken into one of the Government boats as a waterman. The night was a wild one, heavy mists and scud flying; and the belief is that the captain, whilst all his happy passengers were sleeping their last sleep on board, as they thought—their last sleep indeed—anxious to save a day in his run, and perhaps to get out of bad weather, was hugging the coast, looking for 'the Heads;' and that, confused by the shifting clouds, he mistook a sudden dip in the coast-line, some half-mile south of the real entrance, called 'The Gap,' for the Heads themselves. There can hardly be a second opinion as to the impropriety of this conduct; but he went down with his ship, and all inquiry was useless.

It is to be hoped that very many of those unfortunates never knew their fate, but died in their sleep. One blow from the wild waves was enough for those who were not suffocated in their berths. Next morning a great gloom was over Sydney, which is six miles from the Gap by land. Something was wrong. The light-house keepers had heard nothing, and seen nothing, but below them wreckage was about; bodies, too, were washing over the rocks, and a great wreck must have occurred. An emigrant ship, with some four hundred souls, had been reported the previous evening as off the Heads, and been signalled to keep to sea. It was thought that the wreck was hers; but it was soon proved that the lost ship was the *Dunbar*.

The day was tempestuous, as I have said, but every

available conveyance was quickly on the road, whilst hundreds walked, myself among the number. Oh, it was pitiful, pitiful! indescribably terrible! There is, at that particular part of the coast, a slight indent, probably where some portion of the cliff has fallen; for in this small bight fits a perfectly flat rock just under the waves, each roller covering it, and leaving it bare a moment in retiring. Upon this platform the sea was making playthings of its dead; and what heartrending sights each retiring wave revealed! A great sea covered the table-rock, and, receding, left the head and shoulders of a young woman,—the hair streaming wildly out with the retiring water, the arms waving round the trunkless, ghastly face, the whole rolling slowly to sea again. A poor baby, or a bearded head, rolled over the rock, and catching in a fissure, remained glaring there till a stronger wave bore it back to sea. All these, and many, many more, took turns in the ghastly death-whirl. After a while, one recognised the return of the same bodies, often further mutilated, for sharks were about in numbers. And this lasted two or three days,—there was no help for it,—and *ladies* went to see it, but not many, thank God!

A monomania reigned in Sydney. We returned with imagination so disturbed that, eating, drinking, sleeping, trying to work, the mind could see nothing save the ocean giving up its dead. For days, I know, in my case, these ghastly images had such undisputed possession of my every thought, that I began to think I should never recover tone. There was weeping in New South Wales for many a day. Sad tales could be told of

some expectant husband, father, brother, left all alone. The loss of the *Dunbar* was followed by the erection of an inner lighthouse on the very extreme point of the southern entrance, which being weathered, the entrance to the harbour is safe.

CHAPTER X.

A SOJOURN IN QUEENSLAND.

Brisbane, the Capital of Queensland—Life in the Mud—Labourers—The Blacks—A Rascal—Some Scenes of River Life.

THE capital of Queensland, Brisbane, was a very small place when I saw it first; but there was no Queensland then, and Brisbane was only a remote port of New South Wales, known chiefly for being the port of supply for those extensive and splendid squattages, the Darling Downs. It had, at most, a couple of thousand inhabitants and a deputy-governor, Captain Wickham. To Brisbane I went, after much preparation, in the *Boomerang*, a new steamer of some pretensions at the time. We played at cards all the way up, lay at the bar for twelve hours playing at cards, went on to Brisbane and played at cards all night there. I had fallen upon a bevy of returning squatters, and they were keeping it up. Where are all those rollicking, rackety, adventurous, brave young fellows now? One was an Honourable, who knew as much about business as a wild Indian. He failed, of course, and got home somehow. His chief chum was the

son of a baronet, a big, careless, jolly Irishman, with so perfect a stomach that he drank himself to death on the strength of it. One was a barrister; I must speak of him with bated breath, for he is a great statesman now. I had enough of loo to last me a very long time on that trip; and I won £27, which I expended in a farewell dinner on coming away,—a dinner which lasted about two days, I think. I was going there to report for the Government upon possible improvements to Moreton Bay, and had *carte blanche*—that is, so far as a vote for £1050 went.

My first arrival at Brisbane was heralded by a sensation. As we hauled up to the wharf there came a sound of distant voices. Presently a half-naked black fellow dashed along the wharf and leaped at full speed into the river, coming up yards away and striking out for the opposite bank. Running down after him came two native troopers — half-civilised blacks, organized specially under white officers to hunt down their sable brethren. They did not take to the water, but each took deliberate shot at the retreating swimmer, who dived to avoid the bullets. The ferry-boat was alongside, and the troopers were soon in it pulling after the fugitive, who was not half over yet. He stopped, up to his neck in water, lest they should have a better mark ashore, and he shouted out something. They ceased firing and took him into the boat, marching him off again on landing. He was an escaping prisoner—one well known in Brisbane as a determined and dangerous man, and he was forthwith shot or hanged.

I had considerable trouble in engaging ten men,

although the pay I offered was three pounds three shillings a week, tents, and rations. At last I got a motley crew, who seemed to consider that they were doing me a sort of favour in joining me even at that price. All preferred rum to work when the choice was before them. I took down the river two large boats, four tents, and much other baggage. My first camping ground was fixed near a wretched water-hole, scraped out by the blacks, which provided a few quarts of dirty brackish water per day. The camp was on the mainland, on the bank of the river and inside the bar; but besides being far off my work, I found that the men got constant supplies of rum from shell and ballast boats passing up and down. Shell boats, be it known, are craft of six or eight tons to fifteen tons perhaps, which ply on many of the rivers here. They load with oyster and other shells, which are found a few feet underground, lying packed in close beds like coal-seams. These are taken up to the various towns and burnt for lime, of which the quality is very inferior to that used in England. The stone-lime is superseding it rapidly now that railway communication has reached the quarries. So I resolved to 'shift camp' to the 'Outer Fisherman's Island,' a mud swamp in the bay covered at high water all but a few square yards. To this delectable spot I removed, and the men began to pitch tents and arrange things generally. James was with me as cook and servant. At last I had my forces together, and kept them sober enough after two days upon that delightful island. Upon commencing work, however, I found that I had unfortunately left at Brisbane certain indispensables, which I must go for. I unwillingly

took boat, and with a crew of four pulled up to Brisbane. It is fourteen years since last I sailed up the river Brisbane. Alterations were at work then, and I suppose a description of my pull from Moreton Bay would be considered an exaggeration. On the bay itself, forty miles long and forty miles wide, there was utter solitude. My three white tents ashore on the left side going up, just where river and bay meet, with my two boats moored off, were the only signs of life.

Brisbane itself had one street, with certain right-angled streetlets; it was unpaved, and almost unlighted. Communication between North and South Brisbane was by an awkward ferry-boat, keeping its own time, and 'knocking off' at, I think, nine o'clock at night. There was a rough wharf, where the steamer and a few ketches came alongside, and stairs for a few boats. That was *my* Brisbane. A nephew or son of the proprietor of Eagle Farm had taken service with me, and on this occasion pulled the port bow oar. As we were passing Eagle Farm,[1] close in to clear the current, he gave a sudden, violent pull or two, ran the boat's nose into the bank, and leaped ashore, rushing away for the house like one demented. Presently he produced a revolver, and fired several shots amongst a knot of black objects near the house squatted on the ground; these thereupon jumped up and made off at speed. No one seemed to be hit. The man walked round the house, and came back to us, who were waiting to see the result. His

[1] Eagle Farm, a piece of flat, rich alluvial land on the right bank of the river Brisbane, several miles inland, and at this time the only land farmed until close to Brisbane.

explanation was, that he knew his people were to be at Brisbane that day, and felt sure that the blacks would take the opportunity to rob the place; but that they had had a good fright now and would not return. This seemed to me rather summary treatment, but quite customary with him, seemingly. Then we went on, and arrived at Brisbane without further adventure. It was evening, and I was obliged to leave my men to their own devices; and what they would be in a little place devoid of amusement I knew too well. However, I fixed two o'clock next day for the boat to be at the stairs, promising that any one drunk should be left behind. I was there at two next day, but the boat was not. It arrived at four. None of the men were absolutely drunk; none were absolutely sober either. They begged hard to remain until to-morrow, but I was decided, and we started, amid discordant singing and plentiful catching of crabs. I permitted this in silence for a time, but we made poor progress, and the sun was setting while we were still twenty miles from camp.

Two hours and more had, however, passed, and the men were getting steadied, and when I ordered silence and a steady pull, or we should never get to camp, they answered pretty well. One of them, however, named Dan, would go on singing, leaving off pulling to try and light his pipe, and so on. Repeatedly I had to threaten him, but after being silent for a minute, he would begin again. Then I told him that I had given him his last warning. He soon repeated his offence; the men looked at me, and I saw it was now or never. I could not hope to establish order amongst these wild,

runaway sailors, diggers, and what not, if I were beaten now. I was silent a moment, then I ran the boat sheer into the bank. Dan was forward. 'Jump out, Dan,' I said quietly; he did. I seized an oar and shoved off. 'Now, then, lads, pull away!' and away we went, leaving Dan roaring out imprecations and entreaties, alone in the darkening night miles away from anywhere. I kept steadily on down stream.

Not a word was spoken, save that the Eagle Farm man said quietly, 'He'll have enough of it; it's twenty miles of dense bush and Breakfast Creek to cross.' We left Dan's cries of murder behind, and arrived without further remark at midnight. Dan had enough of it; he was out that night and the next, and 'had a bad time,' arriving in Brisbane half starved. Yet he made his appearance at camp on the third day, and had the good sense to admit that I was right. I took him on again, and had not a better man among them all, from that day to the end of it. It was a good lesson, and I had little trouble afterwards with my men, save only my irreclaimable surveyor and a friend of his, a thorough scamp, who had been a lawyer's clerk, who knew just enough of law to be troublesome, and was scoundrel enough to do anything. As he had come up from Sydney, I took him on at first, but had to dismiss him after two or three days. Then he loafed about Brisbane the whole three months of my stay, and when I was leaving, took out a summons for three months' wages, some forty pounds, and served it upon me as I went on board the *Boomerang* on my return. But he made a mistake. I pleaded the Queen's service, and the captain

turned the bailiff, sheriff's officer, or whatever he was, off the ship. Some time afterwards he made his way back to Sydney, and there, thinking of me in his necessity, summoned me to the police court, where, on hearing the case, the magistrate dismissed it at once. Again he made his attempt, and this time cunningly.

I lost one day in camp a pocket-book, which I had laid upon my stretcher when I went out to work in the morning, and forgotten; in the evening it was gone. James had not seen it, nor any one about; but it was gone, and I had always suspected the lawyer's clerk. It contained a few papers and a few pounds, and I saw neither again. This last attempt of my friend's was in the Small Debt Court, and he produced a square bit of paper purporting to be an agreement for three months' service, dated from Sydney, and bearing my signature. I denied having ever signed any agreement with any one for this work, and proved that I had never seen him until at Brisbane. But the signature was undoubtedly mine. I called James, Dan, and another of my late men who was in Sydney. None of them had had any agreement, nor had seen or heard of such a thing amongst the men, who left or were dismissed at pleasure. Suddenly I asked to look at this document. The man demurred, but the judge handed it to me. Yes, sure enough it was the half of the first leaf of my pocket-book, cut off just under my name, which had been on the middle of the page. I explained this, of which I had no doubt, to the judge. The judge said that he was sure of it too, that he knew the man, who was a confirmed drunkard, and that a hundred genuine agreements under the circum-

stances would have been waste paper. He told the fellow that he might be very thankful if it were not made a criminal case. The man came begging to me afterwards, appeared for a while drunk and maudlin about the streets, and died miserably years ago.

Truly, that Fisherman's Island was a dreary place,—a patch of earth, a desert of mud, a sea of water. The quantity of driftwood was surprising, and the multitudes of centipedes truly alarming. At first we had some quarter of an acre of green grass, but Gregory's exploring party landed and cut it all for their horses on board ship. We had to pull several miles to the muddy water-hole for every drop of fresh (brackish) water we had. James used to strain mine through all sorts of things, but it never lost its muddy look and flavour. A thick, searching fog rose every night at dusk, and wrapped us in its folds until the sun came out in the morning. It was shiveringly cold, although in latitude 27° south. Once there came a strong spring tide, backed by an east wind, and then all our country was under water for an hour or two, and we took to our boats.

Influenza, fever, and ague were amongst us, and were only indifferently combated by quinine and strong brandy-and-water. Some one was always down with it, excepting myself; and although I did not actually give way, I passed many a shaky night, and laid the foundation for a special attack of it every year. We soon became much too familiar with our island. Walking was impossible in all that mud, so only boating was left for us. Inside the river bar was a sandbank, the rendezvous of innumerable pelicans, black swans, and great long-legged

water-birds of all kinds. We used to let the boat drift up to the sandbank, and, lying down in her, take aim over the gunwale. We got birds enough, but never a pelican. Our duck-guns and swan-shot did not seem to make any impression upon them; there they stood, idiotically gazing at nothing, doing nothing, thinking of nothing, I am sure. If we made their feathers fly, we hardly succeeded in making them do so; a charge of shot more or less seemed nothing to them.

From the main river branch away numerous canal-like inlets, smooth and still, overhung with thick foliage, affording a deep shade from the hot sun. As with idle oar we floated slowly round the sharp bends, wild duck would rise in thousands, hundreds of thousands I should think, darkening the air, and recalling to my mind vividly the stories of the pigeon flights in American backwoods. Then would stretch before us a long, straight vista, a mile in length maybe, till the leafy sides seemed to close in upon the glassy water.

Nearly all my work had to be done at low tide, and I had consequently much spare time. Boating alone became my favourite fancy. I had not taken to scribbling then, only to thinking and admiring. I began to hate the constant jabbering in high-pitched voice, the everlasting smell of smoke, the tents, and the ground they stood upon. I would take my skiff and paddle up the river, into some of the reaches. Once out of sight, I would lie down on the thwarts, smoking, and drift up and down, backwards and forwards, at the will of the water for hours together, in nature's perfect solitude and profoundest silence. But presently the

faint splash of a diver's sudden plunge would send a gentle ripple over the water and disturb the quiet. Sometimes he came up again, holding in his long beak a plump bream or mullet, with which he soared aloft, its silver scales glittering in the sunshine as it made its useless struggle for liberty. Then silence settled down once more.

Sometimes, when I was well-nigh asleep, the water all around my boat would become alive with motion, a great mass of bream, mullet, yellow-tail, and other small fry dashing hurry-scurry past, leaping forwards out of the water in their haste, and making for the shallows for dear life. And well they might, for what noise was that? Puff—snort—another and another, the dark bodies of a shoal of porpoises would appear following fast—faster than the poor mullet could go, indeed.

Then the river seemed alive with noise and motion; the birds, aroused from their noonday siesta, twittered from their green shades and conversed sleepily with one another upon the chances of this piscine war, forgetful of the mortal fright (mortal to one of them) they had yesterday, when that nasty brown hawk was choosing its breakfast from amongst them. But the little fishes, making their despairing effort for safety and shoal water, are safe for this time.

Who comes here, his black fin cutting the water straight as an arrow, and almost as fast, for the scene of uproar? The king of the deep—a monster shark! He has heard or scented the row, and is coming full speed to take his part in the entertainment, only a

blubbery porpoise will answer his purpose better than those mites of things. But the porpoises, somehow, know about his visit, and are off. Mr. Shark understands the situation, and submits to the inevitable; slackens speed, takes a rapid circuit or so round the abandoned site, and remains stationary near me a moment or two. Then he slowly lets himself down into the depths, where I can presently see him through the clear water motionless on or close to the bottom, save for a feathery movement of his fins. But he has destroyed the charm; indeed, it is not pleasant to see him eyeing me from down there. I begin to feel a little nervous, think of all the stories I have heard of sharks and boats, and pull rather hastily inshore, coasting back again like the little fishes in the shallow. I have never seen such sharks as those of Moreton Bay, and I believe they are considered very large by those who have more knowledge than myself on the subject. One immense, flat-headed brute used to lie under the counter of the *Boomerang* when she was waiting her tide to get over the bar, and the sailors could never take him. They called him the 'boomer,' partly from his size, I suppose, and partly from his intimacy with the ship. He had broken away from a line once, and knew all about that sort of thing. But unconsidered trifles left from dinner, breakfast, or tea had immediate appreciation. The sailors were too many for him, though, at last. They harpooned him, after I had left, as he rose to some tempting morsel. Ah, to be sure, that was also an amusement!

To pull off to the ship, dine, and spend the time with

the captain or other friends till the tide was up, or to take off the captain and friends to my island, and feast them with wild duck and sweet potatoes, washed down with brandy-and-water or tea, was a weekly treat. We got letters sometimes and a Sydney paper five days old, like the peas-pudding of childhood.

Did you ever see porpoises at real play? I never did save once, and, of the several to whom I have related the following circumstance, none had ever done so. I was camped upon a green slope commanding a grand view of the Pacific Ocean. Below my tent was a horse-shoe of hard, white sand, a mile and a half long, a break in the rock-bound east coast of Australia. My favourite lounge, when off work and on Sundays, was this beach. Of course the solitude was perfect; save myself and my party of three, I never saw a living being upon it, save once, when I found two men walking to Newcastle, twenty-three miles off. Wandering here one bright afternoon, the sun high in a cloudless sky, and lending his golden tint to the restless breakers of a turbulent ocean as they rose and beat against the coast, my attention was drawn to a singular sight I had never seen before, although a frequent visitor to the sea-beach. As each wave came on, its sunlit curve was simply beautiful, and I had watched it long. But what now darkens the transparency of the concave? See! a great porpoise darts along the curling water; another and another follow close behind, clearly defined just where the transparency is brightest, looking as though enclosed in a tinted glass case. The wave breaks behind the last one all along the coast as they dash along. Up curls the

next wave, and more are at it. So they go on till weary or hungry, I suppose, when they retreat, and I see them next half a mile out at sea, rolling and puffing in true porpoise style. I haunted that beach during the rest of my stay, but never saw this porpoise game again. Yet it must be usual enough, though, perhaps, it may not be often seen under such favourable circumstances.

We went to Brisbane for stores every fortnight, taking both boats, starting at daybreak, and getting back, if lucky, by midnight. But we knew the river well by this time, and cared little for darkness. Four men were in each boat, James and one man being left to keep camp. On one occasion we were a man short, and James had to remain alone. I was desirous that he should be relieved from his loneliness as soon as possible, but a hitch occurred. We could not complete our loading till night-time, and, James notwithstanding, I thought it better to wait until early morning, rather than to be toiling through the long night against an adverse tide. At daylight we started, and took with us not only the favouring tide, but a fair though light wind. We rattled along merrily, and approached camp at an unexpectedly early hour. When about two miles off, we heard frantic cooeyings from the shore, and a boat shot out from amongst the mangroves, pulling towards us. We put about under the increasing breeze, and lo! as the boat neared us, we saw that the occupant was James,—James in a state of undeniable terror!

A large party of blacks—we found afterwards that there were thirty or forty of them—had made their appearance upon the opposite shore shortly after our

departure the day before, and at sight of our tents they had shown great excitement. James could hear them clamouring across the river. They cooeyed, and evidently invited some one to come to them. James declined the invitation; for, though ready to kill and eat a white man, he had a mortal terror of the blacks. In his early experiences he had had a companion or two picked off by his side; and he did not wish to be eaten, or even cooked, so he remained in hiding. The black fellows, receiving no answer, of course came to the conclusion that the camp, for some unknown reason, was deserted, or at least left for the day. Presently two of them separated from the mob, and walked along the opposite beach, till distance swallowed them.

Hours passed, and then James saw a speck on the distant water. It grew and grew until he was satisfied that the black speck was a boat. It proved to be an old whaleboat, which had been given to the blacks, or which they had stolen and planted somewhere. It came direct for our island, seeing which James loaded our two guns. But the boat stopped at a respectful distance to reconnoitre; then the two blacks, seeing no one, approached gradually, and at last landed. James, gun in hand, accidentally pulled the trigger in his nervousness, and the two blacks took to their boat at the double, and pulled straight back to their party. When they were fairly off, James took my skiff and was away directly, expecting to meet us on our return. But, as we did not return, he sat in the boat all night, and that was all *he* knew.

We took him in tow, and hurried on. Luck favoured

us. It was getting dusk, and our experts decided that no blacks would attempt to cross that night. But this morning? Irreparable mischief might well have been done in three or four hours. There was nothing for it but to push on as fast as possible. So sailing and pulling we made hot speed. As we neared the island, a boatful of blacks was crossing from the other side of the river. We landed first, and nothing seemed disturbed, nor could we see any blacks upon our island. So we made for our tents, and armed ourselves with our guns, revolvers, etc., feeling that we were masters of the situation, whatever happened. Nothing happened, however.

The boat-load landed, and the leaders of the gang came timidly up to us. It seems that they had some native telegraphic information that a Government camp was on the Bay; and although they forgot it for a moment the previous evening, they had remembered it since. The intention had been, nevertheless, to cross early in the morning, and inquire into the comparative solitude; but the possession of a boat was too much for them. All who could crowd into it went out fishing; they caught a 'dugong' and other luxuries, made a huge fire, and remained up all night gorging themselves, as is their nature. Then they overslept themselves, and so saved us, no doubt, from pillage. Now, finding that we were the Government party, they were humble to servility.

They were a motley crew. The first to claim friendship was the King of Moreton Island—the island situated at the head of the bay, facing the ocean. His majesty

was attired on this occasion—and all others, I fancy—in a green cut-away coat with brass buttons, and a white hat, — nothing more! He was a travelled dignitary, spoke very good English of a certain stamp, and had journeyed, in fact,—as he afterwards told me,—for two years with Ducrow's Circus in England and on the Continent. Yet had this man pined for his savage life, and returned to it with all its hardships and privations.

Then there was a queen, too,—the Queen of Brisbane, —a tall, noble-looking figure, at least five feet seven inches high, I take it, and upright as a dart. She, too, spoke English well, and had lived long at the house of a well-known squatter on the Downs. Her present dress was a long white night-gown, with a high collar overlapping her ears. She was surely of a careful disposition, for she denuded herself of this dress at times, rolling it up as a pillow to preserve its freshness.

The rest were mostly from tribes farther north, and almost without knowledge of white people. They had strict orders from the king not to molest us, but they were very troublesome nevertheless. They crowded round us at all times, and perpetrated constant petty thefts of pipes, tobacco, and the like. A half-finished cup of tea or glass of grog was gone the moment one's back was turned. Several of them were girls of from fourteen to seventeen years old. They were, like civilised young ladies of the same age, constantly giggling, laughing a clear, silvery, *taking* laugh, and jabbering unceasingly in the really sweet tone of youth. The men were willing enough to work for grog or tobacco,—work according to their own notion, that is. So they brought

in wood,—not too much at once; pulled the boats here and there, lazily but steadily; fetched water, and so on. But lo! his majesty became jealous, so 'twas said, and on the third or fourth morning all had disappeared, and never returned.

Next, *we* left. The passage back was a rough one. Several years passed ere I saw Brisbane again. It was not my Brisbane, but the capital of a colony, with a governor of its own, houses of parliament, extensive wharves, a government house, and botanical gardens commanding the formerly forsaken reaches of the river.

All things are comparative, and I, who had been wont to despise smaller towns than Liverpool or Manchester, and who even held them rather cheaply compared to the metropolis, felt, as our steamer entered the Heads of our beautiful harbour of Sydney, and I drank in the glorious panorama which opens to one's view, as though, after that hundred days of solitude and mud near Brisbane, I was approaching a fairyland of romance, a world's capital of population.

CHAPTER XI.

COLONIAL STORIES.

Sydney again—A Southerly Burster—Life in the Suburbs of Sydney—'Waterloo: A Story'—The Shell Cove—Haunts of Old Convicts and Bushrangers—Sydney Bay—A Splendid View—'Ashfield: A Story.'

FOR several succeeding years no calls were made upon me for long absences from Sydney. I lived upon the north shore, a mile or two away from the then small but rapidly rising suburb of St. Leonards, keeping bachelor's house in a pretty nook of the harbour, with a gentleman well known in Sydney to-day. We had solitude for a mile around us on land, and a water frontage to a glorious little bay, known on the early maps as 'Shell Cove,' but bearing the euphonious cognomen of 'Murderer's Bay' among the old hands. We pulled across to Sydney every morning to 'business,' returning to dinner at 5 P.M., altogether a five miles' pull or thereabouts; and whatever arrangements we may have fancied during the day, it was a strong temptation which drew us across the water again, when we had dined and put on our slippers.

Later in the evening we would take boat and pull

out into the still night, to persecute 'black bream,' 'schnapper,' and so on, when we sometimes met with varied experiences in a climate whose summer changes are so rapid. From a hot wind to a southerly burster, for instance.

What killed the young lady? A southerly burster.

What is a southerly burster? Well, it is a wind, a gale, a sudden gale from the south, which comes sweeping up the coast at, perhaps, a forty-mile-an-hour speed. It gives little or no warning to the uninitiated, but swoops down upon all. To the old hand, the time of year, the dull, *sullen* atmosphere, the oppressive heat, all tell of its coming. I do not think a 'brick-fielder,' or sudden southerly gale, is quite what it was twenty years ago; increased clearing, for one thing, has given the wind more scope, besides possibly altering its intensity, by improving, or at least changing the climate.

The first 'burster' I saw, came down upon the devoted persons of a score or two of us, waiting at the harbour side the advent of the uncertain, pottering little Balmain steamer. Sultry silence was suddenly succeeded by a roar; we were blown hither and thither and smothered with dust, if that can be called dust which reckoned among its components pebbles the size of peas. When I could look round, hats were lost, ships were dragging their anchors, and an unfortunate schooner, caught broadside, was lying on the water settling down rapidly. She reached the bottom in five minutes. But the streets are paved with blue metal now, and the wind cannot lift that. The brick-fields, just outside the town,

whence the furious wind picked up two-thirds of its missiles, are populous parts of Sydney; so *that* resource for the wind is gone too. Moreover, I suppose, one gets used to the thing also. However, a sudden southerly about the beginning of November is bad enough even now, playing odd pranks with verandahs and roof slates at times.

Woe to the venturesome voyager, 'new chum,' or ship's youngsters, out upon the harbour wearily waiting for wind with fastened sheet! The gale catches them ere they see it coming, and over goes the boat, ensuring a swim and a ducking at best, and too often death by drowning. Treacherous, at such times, to the ignorant or careless is our beautiful harbour.

Once, about five o'clock on an afternoon in November, we were down the harbour off Shark Island, some four miles from our home, which lay about due westward. We noticed the ominous dulness to the southward, and foresaw a 'burster.' Being both experienced hands in a boat, we decided to take advantage of an easterly puff of wind, which came sluggishly up from the Heads, if, haply, we might make home before the 'burster' burst. So we hauled up our kellick (anchor) and our fishing lines, got up our sail, and made off very slowly. Not one hundred yards had we gone when the breeze left us and our sail flapped. We were not to be taken quite by surprise. As the sail flapped, the southern shore was hidden by a darkness of dust. To take down the sprit, lift out the mast and sail, get out oars and pull the boat round head to it, was the work of but a few seconds; yet we were barely in time, for the spray off

the still water was washing our faces ere we settled down to our work. It did blow that time, and the harbour can get up a very pretty sea. All we could do was to keep the boat's nose to it, and let her drift with the wind to Bradley's, where we found shelter in a little bit of a sand bight, well known to boating men. We hauled the boat half up the beach and waited. The thermometer had, as usual, fallen from say 85° to 60°, and we were damp besides. Soon the rain came heavily.

Now, sometimes a southerly of this kind will die out in an hour or two, and we waited patiently for the end. Six o'clock — seven—eight, and it began to get dark. No signs of an abatement. We were cold and shivering, and decided to make a start. We shoved off, and pulled straight out, getting a little sea-room to turn Bradley's Point; then we pulled and pulled. After an hour's exertion, we found ourselves still off Bradley's; so we ran into shelter again on the bit of beach, which we could but just see now. At least, we had warmed ourselves for a time; but at ten o'clock it was raining and blowing as hard as before, and we were colder than ever. It was not particularly safe, I daresay, but we determined to run for it; so in the dark we launched our boat, shipped our rudder, got our mast and sail up under the lee of Bradley's Head, and set off upon our cruise.

Mine was a very stiff boat, and she stood it. We tore along, seated on the gunwale, across the harbour into comparatively smooth water on the sheltered side, went about, and tore back again close past Fort Denison, letting go the sheet, and running ashore at the head of

Shell Cove in what seemed only a few minutes; but the boat was half full of water. *That's* a southerly burster.

But we often took to reading or writing. Several 'fugitive' pieces, verse and other, found their way into the local papers thence. But my chief fancy was the writing a novel,—never finished,—and a series of papers purporting to be authentic records of the causes which gave their names to the suburbs.

We were not quite out of the world, though. We kept open house once a fortnight, when our friends would 'sail' in from the Circular Quay, Lavender Bay, Double Bay, etc.,—sometimes making a night of it, but oftener pulling away in the early morning, when the rising sun was glorifying every beautiful thing about them. Eight o'clock was our hour, and the viands to be met with took the form of 'cold wittles' and bottled ale or stout, with salad fresh from our own garden, or an unexpected *entrée* of asparagus or artichoke improvised by James. It was then the custom to call upon my friend to read our last attempt, which his listeners, generally of the Bohemian stamp, would criticise unmercifully, their opinions being in no wise softened by tobacco and beer.

One hot summer night, I remember a general call upon F—— to produce his manuscript. He pleaded various excuses unavailingly. At last he announced his choice for this tale of the suburb 'Waterloo.' His audience were certainly not prepossessed; for immediately on the announcement of the title, all burst forth with 'Pooh!' 'Worked out!' 'Hackneyed!'

'You must have Quatre Bras and Quatremains as well, to strike originality out of *that* lot,' says Goodman, who has authority as the author of certain sarcasms in verse.

'No, no,' says Champagne Charley, soubriquet of the individual who does the light literature of the *Weekly Joker*. 'I see how it's all done, boys: "Water," "Loo,"—a young lady drowning, and saved by F——; don't you see?'

F—— stands fire well; and when the chaffing subsides, repeats innocently, 'Waterloo,' and is met with a groan of submission.

'Waterloo,—not a name of novelty. The world knows *why* the name has a celebrity world-wide, and where that celebrity was gained. Deprived, then, of choice in those elements of the romantic, time and cause, I am obliged to follow the old beaten track, and merely tell a tale of British pluck,—a tale so often told, thank God! that it has almost become monotonous.

'The sultry summer heat of mid-June stayed not one of that brilliant company who crowded the rooms of Her Grace the Duchess of Richmond, that fourteenth night of June 1815. Brussels was the rallying-point for all. France —France of the old *régime*—Germany, Prussia, Italy, each added its quota of "fair women and brave men" to grace the rooms of the English duchess, who had gathered around her the "curled darlings" of England's chivalry, in all the pride and beauty of their hopeful youth. The noble form of many a grand old warrior, tried and not found wanting in the hour of need, was there too. All were now unbent, suave, and smiling,

basking in the bright beauty of the loveliest ladies of many lands. Lord Wellington was there,—not then the "old" Duke, but the "English Lion," Wellington the undefeated! Thirty-eight years later, England rose as one man to do honour to the old warrior on his way to his last resting-place; but then he was in his prime. Ah! the "Iron Duke" should have died after Waterloo. His glorious career should have closed in his very prime, when forty-five years old, in the arms of well-won victory. But, after all, our little *historiette* has not to do with greatness; we treat but of a "sub." who did his duty, and a girl who loved him.

'He was a gentleman, the only son of his mother. His father lies before Corunna. He was but a captain in a marching regiment. Long had been the struggle in the heart of his mother; but her dead husband had said, ere departing upon General Moore's last campaign, "Make Willie a soldier;" and a soldier Willie would be, for, though good and loving, it was not yet given to Willie to know what a mother's misery meant,—that knowledge comes later. So Willie became a soldier, had seen five years of the Peninsular War, had won medals and clasps, and had reached the rank of captain.

'Wellington was seated in earnest conversation with the Duke of Brunswick, who was nursing a little child, when to them hurriedly entered an aide-de-camp. The Duke's face became stern, and he questioned the messenger closely. The Duke of Brunswick, "fated chieftain," started up so suddenly that the child fell from his knee. Then Wellington spoke a few quiet words to some officers near him, who quietly retired, whilst the

dance went on. But quickly the feeling that "something" was going on gained ground, the hasty disappearance of many officers confirming the general impression.

'Then those two came together. Their course of true love had not run smooth. She was forbidden his society, and had quietly sacrificed herself to what she thought his best interests; for she thought that her handsome soldier (she could not help thinking of him as hers) should have a brighter fate than to waste the best years of his life in waiting for a penniless girl. But now, for them as for so many more less fortunate than they, the iron hand of etiquette is relaxed. The eve of a great battle is a rapid undeceiver of loving hearts, and all her resolutions vanished. She knew now that she could never give him up, save, alas! if it must be, to the relentless arms of death. She was a good and modest girl, yet she returned his loving kisses passionately, answered his backward glances with a hopeful smile, and saw him depart bravely.

'Then for her, and how many others, came those miserable days of waiting,—three days of excitement, action, and danger to the men, many weary days of waiting to the tearful women. The unhappy ladies left in Brussels were abandoned to sadness and anxiety, and tortured with terror, as time passed and rumours of slaughter, defeat, and annihilation filled the heavy air. Crazed with alarm, many of them, believing all lost, fled precipitately. Amongst them our heroine, who would have given worlds to stay, was hurried off in the train of a lady of rank, a distant relation.

'But whilst the days were days of doubt and sorrow to

her, fate was kind. Whilst so many around her heard that a bloody death had taken from them husbands, brothers, lovers, her Willie, his comrades falling round him, his regiment a memory almost, escaped scatheless, and returned to England a major, with many a ribbon and clasp, but without the wounds which so often accompany martial glory. He was one of the heroes of the hour, and the will of relatives gave way before the force of constancy. They were engaged, and met unrestrictedly; yet marriage seemed as far off as ever from them. Again fortune favoured them, and brought a prospect to them of keeping the wolf away. The major's regiment was ordered to New South Wales. Their grief at parting was great, yet they lived on in hope. In Sydney, the major found that an officer of his rank enjoyed many privileges, and that by patient perseverance he might look forward to a competency. But he could not work without her presence to stimulate him. Within twelve months he sent for her. She came gladly, and they were married upon love, hope, and his major's pay. Soon, however, he was able, by help of grants of land, convict labour, and other privileges at that time allowed to soldiers, to establish a homestead. At first they settled upon some land near Sydney, they and many another of Willie's regiment. They called the place Waterloo, in memory, of course, of that great time, and the final battle which had helped them on to fortune. The place retains its name, Waterloo, but most if not all the early residents or their descendants have left it. Willie removed his happy wife and young family to the smiling plains of Bathurst or Goulburn,

where his descendants have still a considerable domain. He prospered and was happy, dying in ripe old age, honoured by all his neighbours. His last words were whispered to his weeping wife: "Dear one, I am content. We have lived a happy life, but I am happier now, for I know that it will not be long ere we meet to part no more." She wept, but was content; she knew it too. But her contented mind, and her pleasure in the happiness of those around her, delayed that meeting. See that placid-featured, handsome old lady, comfortably seated on the wide verandah of that noble dwelling, overlooking the undulating downs and the green pasture dotted with cattle. See how proudly she follows with her eyes the approaching form of her stalwart son; how kindly she smiles upon her busy grandchildren, as she fondly leans her hand upon the shoulder of the eldest, a bright youth of some eighteen summers! She looks long, and says gently, "You grow very like *my* Willie, as I knew him once; be but as good a man, Willie dear, and you will die as happy." A tear is in her eye, and in his too for very sympathy. But she is not unhappy, only waiting for the good time, now so soon coming, when they will meet again.'

There was silence a moment, and I looked around, honestly anxious as to the opinion formed by my Bohemian brethren as to my performance. For, after all, these things were mostly mine. I might have saved myself the trouble. F—— sat very still; for he did me the honour to believe at least a little in my writing,—besides, the elocution was his triumph. Goodman was weeping freely, nay, noisily, into a table-napkin, his

handkerchief rolled into a tight ball on the table beside him, as though previously saturated. Champagne Charley simply said in a sepulchral voice, in weak imitation of Mark Twain, 'And did he die?' De Moke, a foreigner, was fast asleep, and snoring loudly. A fourth man, named 'Brief' because he was a barrister who never had one, exclaimed, 'Why the devil didn't you kill your phenomenon at Waterloo, or, still better, Quatre Bras, and then she might have died of grief so comfortably?'

I am trapped. I ask hastily, 'Why, that would end the story.'

'*Pre*cisely, dear boy,' says Brief; 'you've hit the bull's eye.'

Goodman raises his head, and with one glance at Brief says, 'Oh, demmit, shall it become a nasty, damp, unpleasant body? Oh dear!'

And that was the reception my story met with.

The Shell Cove I have mentioned was opposite Fort Denison, familiarly know as 'Pinchgut'—a name scarce fitted for ears polite, but a *speaking* one truly. Now Pinchgut is an island in the very fairway of the harbour, with abundance of sea-way on either side. 'Pinchgut' was long ago (long in the history, that is, of a colony which does not yet *quite* number a hundred years of existence) a sort of extreme refuge for the destitute. A barren rock with a mile of water around it was surely the very place whereon to put refractory convicts who miraculously escaped hanging. Here, tradition has it, they were half-starved—hence the name.

Sir William Denison, twenty-two years ago, quarried

the point of a peninsula on the north shore, and with the stone built on 'Pinchgut' a fort—Fort Denison. He thereby did very much to destroy the beauty of the harbour, and nothing to strengthen its defences; for on account of the soft nature of the sandstone used, or the questionable foundation of this one hundred yards square island, one trial of the fort and its batteries was found to be sufficient; another trial, it was said by 'competent authorities,' would have brought fort and island to destruction. The authorities never tried the experiment, but it *looks* warlike. However, the tradition runs that a rebellious convict was for some offence or other sent to Pinchgut; that shortly after his arrival he became possessed of some sufficiently powerful weapon, and knocked the keeper on the head; that he and others, having pitched the keeper into the harbour, swam to the north shore; and that after an attempt to make their way northwards, in the insane but ever-recurring hope of finding a continuous continent and homeward route, they had returned and established themselves on the high lands, about what is now the Middle Harbour Road. From their refuge here they made for a long time successful raids upon residents on the banks of the harbour, until surrounded and captured by the military; then they were duly hanged on Gallows Hill, Sydney. Certainly, although it may well be considered daring boldness to remain so long within sight of their late place of captivity, yet had these men great advantages in retaining their position. Nor was there much danger of being discovered. After the first alarm and search through the wide bush, it would be taken for granted that they had moved in

search of the convicts' El Dorado, in which search they would soon be supposed to have perished. They could easily keep out of view, and yet travel in any direction.

The ground rises steeply from the north side of the harbour, and is broken into sandstone ledges, running parallel with each other at tolerably regular intervals of twenty-five to thirty feet. These, all facing the south, have been for centuries exposed to the heavy winter gales, and are weathered by them in constantly recurring curious fashion. Each ledge consists of a level platform, contouring the irregularities of the face of the hill. Above this ledge, a softer sandstone has been worked out to a height varying from four or five to ten or fifteen feet, and a depth into the hill of from ten to thirty feet. Each is roofed by overhanging rock, of a harder quality seemingly, but much honeycombed. The floor of each ledge is flat; the roof more or less arched, and increasing from a thin shell into the main body of the hill, like the upper half of an enormous bivalve. The sandstone facing of the north side of the harbour is thus formed of a sort of series of broken terraces or vaults. The wonderful gum-tree, which seems to defy vegetable nature, to despise soil, and prefer to take root upon a surface rock, covers the whole face of the hill, and if it does not quite hide the entrance to many of these caves, yet the smallest assistance from art enables it to do so. Thus these caves form a sure shelter from all but close search, whilst to go in or out unseen requires but the smallest care.

In one of my many wanderings along one of the smallest of these ledges, I came to a low opening into a

very small hollow, which I had passed often before. This time I fancied that at the entrance the soft sandstone looked slightly worn; so I stooped and entered cautiously, fearing snakes, iguanas, or other disagreeables. The cave was low and small, some fifteen feet by ten. It had a deep bed of decayed fern and other leaves at its farther end, with rotted remnants of rags; and there was a broad deal board which had fallen off some upright sticks fixed in the rock floor, two of which stood, whilst two had rotted away. There was nothing else. This cave did not seem to be known to the few people who wandered over these rocks, and it might have been used by runaways, or it might have been—save that it was rather far from the beach for that purpose—used as a dwelling by one or other of the wretched 'old hands,' who, before population began to spread, eked out a miserable existence by getting rock oysters.

A splendid view is commanded from all these ledges, increasing in grandeur as the range is mounted, until at the summit the panorama can scarcely have its equal. The vast, undulating landscape is marked by mansions of many degrees of pretension, each in its ornamental grounds. Away on our right as we face southwards, the lovely suburb of St. Leonards, which must always be celebrated as the home of the Rev. W. B. Clarke, an enlightened Christian gentleman, who, devoting his long life to science, appealed from 'nature up to nature's God,' died with a world-wide fame as a geologist, and requires especial mention as the prophet of the discovery of gold in Australia. Then to the far left, almost hidden in the bush, The Ranges, where dwells E. O. Moriarty, the Chief

Engineer for Harbours and Rivers—a most important post in a country with eight hundred miles of ocean frontage. Below us, at the harbour's edge, lives John Bennett, Chief Commissioner of Roads: his arduous duties in a new country must be understood by every one. Both these gentlemen have toiled for nearly a quarter of a century at their various duties, and each will leave many a mark of progress behind him. May I add that they are 'great bush company' as well—no mean praise when round a camp-fire. And then our eye crosses the water to the city on the slopes beyond, with its bustling wharves, smoking chimneys, great factories whence the din of distant labour smites faintly on our ear. Opposite to us Government House, at present occupied by the popular sportsman and enlightened Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson. Farther to the left and farther away, obeying a concave sweep of the harbour, passing the tropical Botanic Gardens and crowded Wolomoloo, the rising slopes of Potts Point, Elizabeth Bay, and Woolahra, picturesque with scattered residences of the favourites of fortune, which, in return for the spirit of life and progress with which they animate the scene, hold uninterrupted view of a landscape of attractive beauty. Here dwell many of more than local importance. The Macleays, whose mansion long stood alone, embosomed in the trees upon the western slope of Elizabeth Bay, noted searchers in science. Thomas Mort, a bold speculator in the cause of progress: to him Sydney owes its dry dock, its earliest attempts at supplying cheap meat to England, and many another enlightened speculation to which he gave time and money freely. Sir Edward

Deas Thomson, grown honourably old in the diplomatic service of his adopted land, which he has wisely served since the advent of Governor Burke. The Lambs, Dangars, Gilchrists, whose names stand out in the earlier history of their land, and a host of others. Still farther to the left, the secluded Rose Bay, a bit of beauty for a painter's study. Rose Bay and its one large low house, alone with its orderly grounds, crisp trim lawn, and splashing fountain, where Sir Daniel Cooper once dispensed his generous hospitality as 'Speaker.' Farther yet, 'Vaucluse:' William C. Wentworth, barrister and patriot, who long ago did so much to free his colony from the curse of a convict settlement, lived here. His public funeral six years ago spoke the honour in which his memory is held. Once again, farther, we sight Watson's Bay, and the green trees surrounding the dwelling of Sir John Robertson, one at least of the ablest statesmen Australia has seen, and at the time I write Premier of this colony. The cliffs, the lighthouse, and the glittering Pacific close the view in the distance.

I had to leave my pleasant, lonely, suburban dwelling; but before I bring my account of it to a close, let me give my readers one more story, told under similar circumstances to the last, and to the same company.

'In the good old days there sailed for Sydney one of Old England's woodenest of walls, in the form of a rotten old gun-brig—one of those favoured at that time by the soubriquet of "His Majesty's coffins." However, this coffin was good enough to convey a Governor of New South Wales, with his guard of honour of some three hundred convicts. If all had gone to the bottom

together there would have been little harm done, but the ship, on the contrary, made an extraordinarily quick passage, and bore the old sailor, in the unprecedentedly short period of six months, safely into Sydney harbour. Moreover, quite two-thirds of the convicts were living when the old tub arrived. For the rest, some were impudent enough to die of what *they* called cruelty or starvation; some were shot during the half-dozen mutinies which broke the monotony of the voyage; more were hanged at the yard-arm to celebrate the suppression of each and every of these same mutinies. The old man, who had left his home in sadness, and almost what seemed in its neglect like disgrace, and who anticipated little better than a sort of superior banishment here, was amazed as the old ship tottered into port. All the world of Sydney turned out to gaze; His Gracious Majesty's ——th turned out also to a man, to line the place of landing; every civil servant—ten in all—hastened there also; chain gangs struck work, and looked with even tearful longing upon the ship which had so lately seen Old England. Now, as the "bad old ship" swung head to stream in the smooth and glittering water, "bringing up" to her anchor and its clanking chain, a gig shot from her side; the cannon—two or three ashore and two or three afloat—roared; the regimental band struck up "God save the King," and cheers, which, had there been more throats in action, might have rent the air, arose. That sea-worn Governor gazed into the clear blue sky, into the rippling water, drank in the beauty of our magnificent harbour, and thought that he had not been so hardly dealt with after

all, and held himself bravely, as a sailor should, before the bowing residents as he stepped ashore.

'But my story is not of him. He "served his time" like the rest, built divers ugly and inconvenient public buildings, had his little difficulties with free and bond, hanged not more than the customary number on Gallows Hill, gave his dinners, his May ball,—when in those days, I am told, it was possible to get to supper *under* a delay of two hours,—spent his income royally, and went home to starve and be forgotten. With him came an aide-de-camp, a good-looking, fresh-faced young soldier, Edward Charteris, his age twenty-one years.

'The Sydney black fellows were a tribe then, treated with the savage barbarity usual in those highly-civilised good old times. Hunted to despair and shot down ruthlessly, they had the impudent audacity occasionally to turn upon their oppressors, when a white man or two would haply bite the dust. To go far into the bush alone was at all times hazardous. Yet Charteris did so from the first, endeavouring to conciliate the natives whenever he saw opportunity, under the absurd idea that they were oppressed or ill-used. However, by dint of firmness, kindness, tobacco, and rum, Charteris did establish a sort of freemasonry with these poor, hunted wretches, many of whom, indulging in that truly uncivilised virtue, gratitude, would have done much for him. He assisted at many a torchlight fishing or corrobboree, when never another white man dare have ventured.

'To one youth he paid special attention. He brought him home and taught him many of the ways of civilisa-

tion, making him, indeed, his own attendant. But Syd could not stand it, and one night he disappeared; nor did Charteris see him again for two years.'

'Now the Governor had a daughter, as Governors have or may have, her name being Mary. Charteris loved her, and she loved him. Charteris being well off, whilst the Governor was poor, the course of true love ran smooth, and St. James' Church saw one of its earliest marriages, if, indeed, St. James' was then built. The wedded couple never regretted it, which is more than can be said for all St. James' marriages. But now they require a house, and will build one. They chose a site about six miles out of Sydney, near the track just beginning to be called the Liverpool Road; a fine sloping site, commanding many a mile of undulating landscape. Here they marked out a sufficiency of ground, and men were at once set to work "clearing."

'They made quite a gala time of it when it came to burning off, inviting several friends to witness the ceremony of lighting the piles, little thinking that they were to be funeral ones. There was no moon; the time was chosen so, for moonlight would have lessened the effect. The north-east wind was blowing pleasantly, and the great stacks of timber soon blazed fiercely. Then the fun began. Every lady was to cook supper for her particular party; doughty deeds were done on devilled drumsticks, grilled chops, potatoes "with their jackets on," hot and hot from the glowing embers, and the wine cup passed round merrily. It was a pretty picture, figures flashing out into the sudden light of the great fires, or gliding into as sudden darkness outside

their glare. Now, the men were to make a night of it, camping-out before the fires, and keeping up the fun till morning. The ladies were to return to Sydney. Time passed; the night grew late; and after much laughter and a hearty cheer from the gentlemen, the ladies went. Eight men remained, two of them being officers in the —th, who had taken part in a late raid upon the blacks. The latter had been driven back upon the Blue Mountains with much slaughter. There were also two officers from H.B.M. ship *Daredevil*, then in harbour. These were a luff and a middy, new chums, who enjoyed themselves immensely. Then there was Charteris, who remained with his guests, of course. Lastly, they had three convict servants. Presently, to the great surprise of Charteris, "Syd," whom he had not seen for years, made a sudden appearance on the scene. He told Charteris that he often watched him, and had been doing so all that evening. He said further, that he had followed the carriage of Mrs. Charteris, seeing the driver was drunk, and had found it stopped on the road, the coachman being fast asleep on the ground, and the ladies afraid to move. Mrs. Charteris, he declared, had asked him to come back, and, without disturbing the company, to ask Charteris to join them, bringing a man with him to drive them home. The alarmed husband called a servant quietly, and started at once; but on arriving at the place indicated, he found neither carriage nor ladies. Syd, too, had disappeared. In dire terror of some fatal mishap, he went on to Sydney, where he and his servant caused much surprise by their unexpected appearance. The ladies had not seen Syd, had not been upset, indeed

had met with no mishap. "However, Ned," said his wife, "one good thing remains, you will have a comfortable night's rest, for you will never return till morning; it is two o'clock now." And so they settled it. Now, although Charteris had heard distant shouts and cooeys as he ran after the carriage tracks, he had supposed them to be only his friends calling him back; and although he wondered at Syd's conduct, he slept calmly.

'Next morning he and his wife drove out together, Mrs. Charteris thinking that she ought to apologize to her husband's guests for his sudden absence. They saw no one, although the fires burned fiercely. On reaching the spot, they found that the piles had been fed indeed. Six charred and mutilated bodies were burning upon them. No one could recognise the remains, and all were buried together. It was black fellows' revenge. The fatal fires had betrayed the whereabouts of the poor whites, and the blacks had swooped down at day-dawn upon the unarmed men, sleeping heavily no doubt, murdered them, and thrown their bodies into the flames. Mrs. Charteris was borne away insensible, and kept her bed for many a day.

'Great was the grief, mad the indignation, terrible the vengeance! Wherever was a black fellow reported to be wearing a bit of navy cloth, a gilt button, a hat, a handkerchief, anything which could be ever so remotely traced to the murdered men, that black was hunted down and shot like a dog. Whole tribes were decimated, and the Sydney blacks well-nigh annihilated.

'Charteris and his wife returned home as soon as Mary

could leave her bed. Their house was never built; they never went near the site again.

'Long lay those half-burned piles of wood and ashes. Years after, when the winds of heaven and frequent bush fires had scattered every vestige of them, the charcoal-burners and woodmen shuddered as they passed the ill-omened place, and whispered the dreadful tale. It is called "Ashfield" to this day.'

CHAPTER XII.

THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.

The Season of Floods—A Cure for a Sore Throat—The Visit of the Duke of Edinburgh—The Attack upon his Life: A Personal Narrative—I interfere to save O'Farrel from being lynched—The Mining Mania—Roughing it in the Bush—Finding Companions—Delights of the Trip—Doubtful Pleasures—A Railway Journey.

THE two or three years of that time were those when the much-believed-in but little understood cycle of times had brought the seasons of floods, which now, season after season, inundated the rich alluvial lands of our rivers' banks. The floods swept down the Hawkesbury, Hunter, Shoalhaven, and other rivers, bringing ruin to crops, death to cattle, and danger, distress, and even death too, to many human beings. As these floods are periodical, although the periods are not too well defined, and the farmers know that after a dry year or two they will come, one would think that, notwithstanding the richness of their soil, these low-lying lands would be abandoned. It is not so; the fable runs that two successful seasons will repay for a flood upon the third. I cannot think it, since the distress of these districts after a flood is notorious, and collections are

always made far and wide for present help and means to provide seed for future crops. Perhaps with the contributions the experiment may pay. However this may be, we had several wet seasons about the year 1864, and dire distress prevailed. Nevertheless, not later than the following year, I passed through the flooded districts of the Hawkesbury. Crops were luxuriant, cottages were occupied within the area of the rising waters, and all seemed security and prosperity.

Then I had to leave the north shore, where I had *lived*, and recommence existence in Sydney proper. That was a winter of late hours, club dinners, and much whist. Some of the best players frequented the club. Many are now dead; of one of them Charles Lamb had said some forty years before, 'Oh, Henry, if dirt were trumps, what a hand you would have!' he was passionately fond of whist, and an inveterate player. The Prussian consul, since returned to Europe; the late Speaker, the Hon. W. M. Arnold, since drowned in a flood opposite his own door on the Patterson; and many another, now scattered to the four winds, were to be found nightly in the club drawing-room, and a good rubber might be depended upon.

But towards the close of that winter an illness seized me—the only one I have had in all these years. This was only a severe cold, which I utterly neglected; and then it took the form of an ulcerated throat, which resisted all attempts at cure, save early in-door hours. These did not suit me, so I kept my sore throat and my late hours; went to bed at 1 or 2 A.M. with a wet bandage, wakened in pain, swallowed with difficulty,

and lived for several weeks upon slops only. But why tell all this? Merely on account of the sequence—the remedy. I now once more saw snow—real, deep snow. I was instructed, in the very depth of winter, to go to a place within a few miles of the Kiandra or Snowy Mountain diggings. I took a groom with me. The railway was now open to Berrima, a distance of some fifty or sixty miles, I think. We had still to drive the rest of the way. When half-way to Goulburn, we were met by severe storms of sleet and cold southerly gales. We arrived soaked to the skin. We started next day in the same storm; it changed to snow as we progressed, and we travelled, be it said shortly, day by day in a continual snowstorm, which kept in attendance on us until our return. In three days my throat was well, and I have never had a return of its weakness since. I think Mandelson's Hotel cured me. It is gone, and the landlord dead now; but at that time, Mandelson's Hotel at Goulburn was, without exception, the best in New South Wales. It was, indeed, a house of entertainment. It was a right good house, right well kept, where you could have your airy bedroom, comfortable bath, private room, with quick, respectful attendance, and dine by yourself when you liked on what you liked.

This was the time of the great bushranging. Gilbert Hall, the Clarks, etc., were abroad. We were advised to take all sorts of weapons, our journey leading us through the very heart of the infested districts. We took none, and were quite unmolested, neither hearing nor seeing anything extraordinary, save, indeed, that halting in a deeply-wooded valley, through which our

way wound, we read, cut in large letters into a great gum-tree, an announcement that here, in an encounter with bushrangers, mounted policeman —— was killed on the —— of ——, some few days previously.

The trip lasted about three weeks. It was a cold and bracing journey, and it set me up completely. This was in 1866, and soon we began to hear rumours of the coming Duke of Edinburgh. The intervening year went too slowly for some of us. At last the time came, and the man. Whatever such things may be elsewhere, that was an exciting time here. I was present at most, or at least many of the events which followed the Duke's arrival. I saw the *Galatea* enter the Heads and sail down the harbour. I got wet through looking at the fireworks. I was on the balcony of the Civil Service Club when the Duke made his public entrance, and saw the uplifted baton from the Crow's Nest when the children sang 'God save the Queen.' I got wet through again on the illumination night. I saw the Prince play at billiards at the Union Club. I saw the common people move respectfully out of his Highness' way in the streets, and the ladies mob him at the flower show.

I saw him at levee and review, at ball and races, and was well pleased with his manner always. I also was close by on that nearly fatal day at Clontarf; but about that one event I must be a little more discursive, as there may be something of novelty in the free expression of one's thoughts and feelings.

As morning broke on the 12th day of March 1868, I awoke from a short, broken slumber in the close and littered cabin of the good ship *Sobrayon*, outward bound.

I had been there all night, for I was performing the always unpleasant task of 'seeing off' a passenger.

I was weary and dull, and, joining two friends who were upon the same errand, we wearied and moped in company. Nevertheless, we went through the orthodox performance, and only left the ship when at the Heads. For my part, I was decidedly tired of junketings, dinners at clubs, and what not. What a bore all these things must be to royalty! I had thought to avoid this Clontarf business, but on arriving at the Sydney wharf about ten, we found *every* one going, so determined to go also.

The day was splendidly fine, the company numerous, and, if not all select, had whatever of the select Sydney could furnish amongst it. We were down some two hours before the Prince arrived. He was, I think, rather late; at all events, some of the select subscribers had long been seated at one or other of the large tables, and calls were not wanting for the feast to commence, although the Duke had not come. At last he came, and we all hurrahed; then all who could sat down to lunch, and all who couldn't, looked on and licked their lips. Several speeches were made, and then the Prince came out, followed by all the *élite*.

There was a rush for the second edition of the feast. Now, I had been attending upon some ladies, but had had something or other standing, and, thinking to finish my repast at leisure, lounged into the great tent to find every seat occupied; so I returned to the entrance, and stood there a few moments, looking towards the scraggy belt of trees which divides the green lawn from Middle

Harbour waters. Twenty yards away, between the tent and the beach, walked the Prince and Sir William Manning in serious converse. As I looked, some one ran up from behind; it was O'Farrel. He fired, and the Prince fell with an exclamation. Sir William Manning turned towards O'Farrel, who stood pistol in hand, and as he pointed it, Sir William fell.

All this passed in a moment. I started as hard as I could run, with thoughts of vengeance in my mind. I saw some one throw his arms round O'Farrel as another shot went off at random, wounding a gentleman named Thorne in the foot,—a gentleman who took his punishment so quietly, that one is apt to forget that he was punished at all. Three or four others arrived before me half a second or so; but Vial had O'Farrel fast, and the others seemed to think that to pound the two promiscuously with sticks, fists, umbrellas, *anything*, was about the right thing to do. Another second, and a score were at it. Now as I ran I had altered my mind. It would never do that a company of gentlemen, especially Sydney gentlemen, who had still a little of Botany Bay memory to remove from home opinions, should, even under this desperate provocation, execute lynch law. So, when I saw what was going on, I hastily decided to protect the miscreant until the police had him. I tried at once, therefore, to pull off some of the madmen who were screaming around to 'murder' him, and doing their best to compass his murder too. I found presently two or three more with heads on their shoulders, notably Kreft, curator of the museum, and being a big six foot and more man,

he pitched the assailants about ruthlessly. In a few moments the police were up from all sides; and forming a cordon round O'Farrel, already nearly senseless, we stumbled and staggered our way to the steamer, the crowd of 'gentlemen' making ever and anon blind rushes at O'Farrel, and striking at him over our heads and shoulders, hitting us as often as the object of their vengeance.

Up and down, we made our way to the steamer, just in time to avoid an organized rush of men who should have known better, with the view of seizing O'Farrel and lynching him. The warps were loosened, and the steamer kept away from the wharf. A pretty figure I was by this time. I had been up all night, and was not too bright and fresh before; but now! We formed double line, hand-in-hand, leaving a lane free down which the Prince must be carried to the steamer, which now lay alongside the jetty. The tent was thrown open for air, and we could see the Prince as he lay, his attendants bustling round him. We stood so a long time, how long I forget, but long enough for me to get into several squabbles with excited strangers as to my conduct in screening O'Farrel. When the Prince was at length borne down, we closed in and followed on board the steamer. Here I found the ladies, whom I had not seen since the catastrophe. They were young girls, had lost their protectors, and were in a nervous and hysterical condition. I remained with them.

On our arrival off Farm Cove, we stopped whilst the *Galatea's* barge came alongside. She carried mattress, pillows, and blankets. A hoist had been rigged on the

steamer, and the Prince was lowered tenderly into the boat. Now all on board had been absorbed in this performance, and no one was on the look-out. The steamer took advantage of the situation; whilst all this was going on, she was forging slowly ahead with the flood-tide towards one of Her Majesty's ships.

I know not who saw the state of things first, or whether any one saw it at all. At any rate, it was not seen until it was too late. I was looking eagerly over the side with the two girls, when I was startled by a snap: this was the jib-boom of the man-of-war carrying away part of the steamer's foremast. I had just time to drag my charges from under the chain supporting the funnel on the port side, when the jib-boom carried that away, and it fell, missing the ladies, but giving me an awkward bruise on the fore-arm, with which I was holding them back. I looked to see the funnel fall, but it did not. The great boom then travelled along over the steamer, and over the boat in which lay the Prince, which boat the alarmed crew were making frantic efforts to shove away. I thought the Prince *was* to be killed now; but we cleared somehow or other. Whether we carried away our second stay, or the ship a bit of her boom, I don't know. After that we arrived in Sydney Cove and landed. I think very few knew of this accident, and I believe it was never related in detail before.

The people raved and cursed O'Farrel, and thirsted for his blood. At the clubs they did the same. The song was ever repeated, interrupted only by the popping of corks, 'Why wasn't he lynched?' 'Cowards, to let the police keep him!' and so on. I was nearly being shot, or

at any rate horse-whipped, that night. But the bulletins were favourable; the Prince recovered fast; and the day when he had been allowed to 'try' a spring chicken, people began to admit that good service had been done in saving O'Farrel for the law to deal with. So the Prince got well, and was soon driving his four greys again. I thank God not only for his valuable life spared, but that the stigma of his murder does not rest, however unfairly, upon this bright land, which has sins enough to answer for. It was a diplomatic thought, and a kind one, that brought the Prince fearlessly amongst us, his mother's loyal subjects, in the following year.

The Prince gone, and with him the year of grace 1869, our royalty mania was replaced by a mining mania. Our population is small, but we all went mad, all excepting those few who should have been in it—the rich, plodding, never-risking 'old hands,' who could find the money without crippling their resources, and so could afford to wait results patiently. These men did not 'go in.' In the very furor of the mania one of them said to me, 'No, I don't do it; a good property in George Street at seven or eight per cent. suits me better.'

'Yes,' said I; 'but who is to develop the mineral wealth of the country if you wealthy men, who owe your wealth to New South Wales, do not?'

'Mineral wealth be d——d!' was his encouraging reply.

But we others rushed headlong, we knew not where, but a hundred to ruin for one to wealth. It was with us as with other maniacs, nothing was too wild or foolish for us. But after all, I firmly believe that nearly all the

speculations entered upon, save indeed the *very* swindles, would pay moderately, but satisfactorily, if worked temperately with a sufficient capital and sufficient time. There the gold is; but what was the use of trying to get at it, with not one-half, not one-quarter sufficient capital? A paltry £2000 expended, six, eight, or twelve months over, the claim would be abandoned, whilst an expensive shaft, emblem of folly, but yet showing the way to money, remained, its timbers rotting, its sides falling in. But as yet we had our money, what little we possessed, in our pockets, and mad hopes in our teeming brains. The country was full of miners, agents, and speculators searching for 'Tom Tiddler's ground;' literally, 'looking for gold and silver,' as also indeed tin, copper, coal, quicksilver, or any other mineral.

Now any stranger had but to get himself up with an 'underground' look, with above all a Cornish vowel complaint, or Northumbrian burr, and it is no exaggeration to say that he might walk into nine offices out of ten in this city, state his calling, ask for the principal, produce his samples, describe the mine he had found, and straightway cause to appear a prospectus of 'The Southern Hemisphere Gold Mining Company, capital £—— in ——— thousand shares of one pound each, so many paid up, so many issued to the public.' Then the concern would be 'floated,' the shares all taken up ere one bedazed shareholder in a hundred knew what the mine was or even where it was. Or a so-called 'mining captain' would produce his samples, and declare that from their appearance and richness he was convinced

that a mine of fabulous wealth must exist in near vicinity to the spot where these had been found—a spot known only to himself. Forthwith one sanguine gentleman would collect other sanguine gentlemen; these would equip the mining captain with a roving commission over this imaginary district, promise him pecuniary interest when a mine was found and a company floated, and pay him meanwhile a handsome salary. I suppose the gallant captains *did* prospect sometimes; anyhow, the position suited him well. Whether a mine was ever found as the result, I know not.

A man who had been, or who was, but a miner,—rather a superior one, probably, or he could not well keep up the farce,—had only to visit a given district so as to know its features, collect specimens, bring them into Sydney, and get an appointment of £5 or £6 a week, and contingent advantages. What did he want with contingent advantages? Master of a wide, rough country, no probability of any one disturbing him, it was easier to sit in the public-house and write a letter once a week, than go exploring about steep gullies or wet creeks. The temptation was altogether too much. Besides, specimens would do again! Several are said to have travelled on service from New Zealand to Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane—any or all of these places.

I heard of one *very* intelligent mining captain, who was working *three* 'Prospecting Companies' at once, and yet never left his public-house, nor took the trouble to get sober for three weeks together. He could hardly afford to get sober, though. He had £13 or £15 a week to spend, and it took him all his time to do

it. Still, notwithstanding all these, others were honest, and, believing in their own statements, lost their time and money with the rest.

Now in the height of this folly, in the summer of 1871-72, I, having great interests (value nothing, but I did not know that then) at stake, and my time just then much at my own disposal, determined to make a *roughing-it* bush tour, partly for amusement, partly for business. My great centre of attraction was that golden land *par excellence*, 'Hill End,' and the River Macquarrie diggings generally.

What a splendid thing is a walking tour through our wild bush to *talk* about, especially to shrinking damsels in full dress! A description of all sorts of hardships and adventures, which you have probably never gone through, gives you a sort of 'Burke and Wills'[1] interest with the admiring fair. But how many of our city residents will voluntarily try it for a month, although that is a mere bagatelle to the regular trips of overlanders, wanderers to northern diggings, and such genuine bushmen? Certainly, to the unaccustomed, camping-out and bushing are not altogether agreeable. There are hardships in plenty, and dangers too, to be faced in Australian wanderings. We have no tigers or lions, 'tis true, but we have snakes in plenty; we have nasty black centipedes two feet long, abounding in multitudes in some places; we have wild cattle, which occasionally gore a man to death; we have bushrangers, and men

[1] Burke and Wills, two brave explorers who died of starvation in the far bush. A handsome monument in Collins Street, Melbourne, records their fate.

(sometimes of one's own party) mad with D.T. We can lose our way, and die alone, miserably, of thirst, as numbers, alas! do yearly; or we can *know* our way, and yet die upon it. We have bridgeless rivers to ford, in high flood often; and last, not least, if we go far north we run a very sufficient risk of acting as targets for the spears of a dozen black fellows, and forming their evening meal thereafter. All this we must run the risk of, to say nothing of mosquitoes; sandflies infinitely worse than mosquitoes; leeches a foot long, which fasten upon you and draw blood copiously ere you know it; flies by the hundred, attacking your eyes in battalions; and 'tics,' which make disagreeable attacks upon you also. This, I have been told, is an exaggeration, but that the small deer do exist and are very troublesome, all will admit; and that many are lost, many drowned, and many killed by blacks every year, is too sure to be questioned.

Now I wanted a companion, and had made known my want at clubs, inviting, indeed, more than one drawing-room enthusiast to accompany me.

'What? a walking tour! How jolly! I should like it of all things—splendid! And the camping-out, too—glorious fun! Oh, I'll go! I must go!' and my enthusiast would talk of nothing else all day. 'We're going. Have you heard of our trip?' and so on. But the next day comes the toning down. 'My dear fellow, I am distracted; I fear I cannot go with you—such an *awful* press of work. However, I mean to try. I'll strain every nerve, only don't depend upon me.'

At last these men, all idle enough at other times, could

not manage to get away, and I went alone, save for hired company. At first the thing is thoroughly disheartening to the uninitiated, and it requires some pluck to go on, where an option exists. You have time upon your hands—there is no need to hurry; so you decide to take the thing coolly, and get into it by degrees, only walking twenty miles the first day or two. But twenty miles of good road about Sydney is nothing to this twenty miles. Walk—walk; now a long, steep hill to mount, the road composed of broken boulders and rough protruding masses of rock. Having panted laboriously to the top of this, you have to go down again, an experiment harder upon the calves and knees, and worse for the boots, than the other. Down at last, and at the bottom runs a nasty creek, which you have to ford; then with soaked boots you must master a 'soft' bit, through which you flounder ankle deep in mud. After that a 'good' bit, as every chance passenger has told you, which good bit of intensely rough road is worse than all the rest, by reason of its endless length of tiresome monotony, hot sun, hopping magpies, drooping gum-trees repeated *ad nauseam*, crows and laughing jackasses seeming to keep you company in ridicule.

But now comes a bush tavern. Here you are told that you have perhaps six or seven miles more to go. You rest disconsolately; drink brandy, very likely. If you do, you probably fall asleep, and waken presently all the worse for it. Then you start off again. You are footsore for the first mile, and limp; you are altogether more weary than if you had not stopped at all.

Yet you go on and on, and when you think you must be far beyond your destination, you meet a fast horse team, the drivers of which tell you that you have only a mile more to go. You strike out sturdily, and so expend the last of your energy.

But oh! new chum, never take the word of mounted man, woman, or child, in the bush, as to distances. They have as much idea, most of them, of a mile as a pigeon can have. It shall befall you to meet an equestrian going at free canter with loosened rein. 'How far to Shilly Shally?' 'Oh, about a mile and a half. Good day.' And off canters the cornstalk. You trudge on, and after a weary hour of it meet a bullock team, the driver toiling slowly beside his two-mile-an-hour beasts. 'Eh? how far to Shilly Shally? Maybe three mile, or better. Come up, Strawberry!' Crack! 'Come here, Smiler!' Crack! And he and his heavy company move on.

Probably the bullock-driver is nearly right. He has measured the way with slow footsteps, bullock-hide, and curses. This has happened often to me, and may happen to you. But now, at last, your day's journey is over. Happy man! Wearied out, you throw yourself upon the sofa, kick off with difficulty your sodden boots and socks, lounge lazily into the bath-room, and turn on the 'warm' tap first. There you bathe your swollen feet. Whence returning to the soft sofa, you lie sleepily, your hands under your head, following with closing eyes your neat-handed maiden, spreading the white cloth, laying the silver forks and spoons and bright cut glass, all accessories to the enjoyment of that little

supper wherewith your loving spouse tempts your exhausted appetite. You rouse yourself sufficiently to take a sip or two of dry sherry, and then it comes,—say a sweetbread with brown sauce, and then curly fried potatoes, a breast of wild duck with bread sauce, and pint of Cliquot; or even a crust of new bread, new butter, oysters, and bottled beer. Ah! but there *is* no sofa, nothing save an old log to sit upon,—a hollow old log suggestive of snakes, a home of centipedes or soldier-ants. Boots! Yes, your feet are very sore and swollen, the pulse is beating under the stretched elastic; but take them off? No; they must dry upon your feet. You couldn't get them on again. Some hours hence you may take them off; but what good then, seeing you have no slippers? Bath! Ha, ha! bath! Why, the only utensil you have is the tin dipper, at present full of a clayey-looking liquid, and set upon the fire—which some one has had time and energy to light—preparatory to making tea in it. You can, perhaps, just damp your face in some two hours' time, but you must wait for a bath till you come to the nearest river. As for wild duck and champagne, you can have those when you get home again. Your ideas descend rapidly indeed. Presently you are served with a dose of gin out of a pannikin made of tin, instead of the dry sherry and cut glass you dream of. The one pannikin goes round, and your turn comes next after that of your servant, who has been chewing tobacco all day; none the less, you drink it gladly, and it does you good. You could not have done *that* yesterday. Then you throw yourself prone upon the ground, on grass if there is any, and

hard indeed it feels to your tired limbs, as you toss about disconsolately in search of that which you never find—an easy posture. By George, it's damp! Think of that rheumatism two years ago! You start up hurriedly, and your strained muscles complain. You stand with your hands in your pockets, whistling in melancholy strain, 'I care for nobody; no, not I,' and inwardly cursing the folly that brought you there.

It is getting dark now, and you are fasting from all but gin since noon. Clouds gather heavily south-easterly, and you look for rain. At least you have never noticed, since, perhaps, the voyage out years ago, how the clouds do seem to 'bank up' with the gloaming; but then you never deliberately anticipated being out all night.

Meanwhile your companions, who, if you have had a gleam of sense ere starting, are accustomed bushmen, are getting on. A handful of tea is just being thrown into the boiling clay and water in the pannikin on the glowing fire beside the dead log, and salt junk and damper are set out on tin plates; or, perhaps, this being but the first night out, you are feasted upon ham and eggs and loaf bread, to let you down easily. Your modicum is brought to you where you stand; you take it, defy the damp, and sit down again. The tin pannikin is very hot, the liquid it contains black with floating sticks, there is no milk, and really, dead-beat though you are, you cannot drink it. So you put it down, and try your ham and dry bread with black-handled knife and two-pronged steel fork. But by what manner of acrobatism are you to balance your plate,

hold knife and fork, and eat? There is nothing for it but sitting on the ground tailor-wise. You try your pannikin once more. The tin burns your mouth; you swallow sticks tasting of treacle—ration sugar. Putting your plate upon your knees, you endeavour to cut off a mouthful of something or other, and over goes the lot. Really, you feel relieved; for your pampered stomach refuses the food altogether, and you give it up. You rise again from your cramped position, and stand erect—that is to say, after a while you do, for your stiffened spine at first refuses to be straightened. You stare intently into obscurity this time, make no attempt at whistling, be it never so mournfully; and mentally write yourself down an ass. Your companions are still eating; surely they never will satisfy their enormous appetites! Yet in time they do, and then 'wash up,' which does not take long. After that your servant takes compassion upon you, and spreads your blankets. You think about it for some time, and then lie down. Your companions snore; and the more they snore, the wider awake are you. You lie staring at the moon, the stars, the weird branches of the fantastic gum-tree, and think what a fool you are to be here at all. Presently you start, for you have heard a 'hugh' close to your ear. You stare vacantly at a receding 'possum whom you have alarmed, but, recollecting where you are, ruminate again, and once more sleep. Presently you look round you; it is morning, and you are obliged to confess—to yourself only, be sure—that you have slept soundly enough. So you get up, damp, stupid, stiff, miserable, but somehow

hungry too, and at least ready-dressed, and with nowhere in particular to wash.

You take commune with yourself, and you are interrupted by a call to breakfast, which you eat and drink now readily enough; and then you either 'give it best,' and return home never to try it again, or you go on pluckily, and if you do, bush life improves with marvellous rapidity. In a week, you have accommodated yourself to everything, and enjoy health and appetite, to which, however well you have thought yourself, you have long been stranger. Anent this dampness, I have spoken of blankets, and very good things they are, too; nevertheless, fight shy of them. Take opossum rugs, or, still better, rugs of native bear; you will never get damp through that. Confess I let you off cheaply in the matter of advice, but take this, do. Of course, I know that when one is seventeen years old, has read all about Mayne Reid and the rest of them, advice from a bushman of twenty years' experience is presumptuous; yet take it this once. I will not offer more of it. I am not a taxidermist, I assure you.

But this historiette does not apply to me, at least not now. I am to travel with a spring-cart and luxuries this time. I bought a spring-cart; I fitted it with hoops and canvas cover; I introduced to the shafts of this vehicle my buggy horse, who at first objected, as well he might, but soon became accustomed to them, and behaved like a true-bred animal all the time thereafter. Into the cart were put mattress, pillow, and blankets for me, and more blankets, billys, buckets, plates, etc., for general use. Thus loaded, the cart started from Sydney,

I having given my man and his companion three days to get to Wallerawang, the point at which the railway ceased. Unfortunately, rain descended, and when they telegraphed their arrival at Wallerawang, the Cox river was up, and no progress possible. So my companions had 'a good time' camped out in a swamp. Four days later I rose, looked at the sky, dressed, swallowed my tea, and called a cab. I sat well back in the middle of that cab, observing with folded arms and high-bred air of contempt those who walked. Walked, indeed! *I* had to walk presently. I left my cab and my dignity at the station, for in the train there was not room for dignity. In those mania times, a crowd of people were constantly going backwards and forwards, and the trains were packed.

Amongst the peculiarities established by railways, none is more marked than the deliberate unconcern with which your friends hear of your intended departure. People used to get up at any hour to see you off by the old coaches; they used to take an interest in you, perhaps speculate upon whether you would arrive safely. They come sometimes, even yet, to a steamer; but a railway station!

'Ha! going to Jerusalem, old man? When will you be back? I'll not say good-bye; come and see you off in the morning.'

'Do, my boy. Good-bye till to-morrow.' Now *you* know that he will not come to see you off, and *he* knows that *you* know it, but the promise saves bother, and suits both of you. Then there are such a lot of you in one carriage! Ten to one your worst enemy sits opposite, or

your tailor who is suing you, to either of whom you have to behave with the most studied politeness for six hours to come. Then the guard is dead against you, and insists upon seeing your ticket a score of times.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TRIP TO THE GOLD FIELDS.

Wallerawang—A Futile Attempt to Camp Out—More about the New South Wales Roads—Bullocks *versus* Horses—An Accommodation House—A Pessimist—Hill End—A Stiff Day's Work—Golden Ground—Upper Pyramul—Diggers and their Oaths—The Gold Mines—Wet Weather—Tambaroora—Lumps of Gold.

AT last I reached Wallerawang, and on going to the public-house I found my cart and men just come to meet me. Off we drove to camp, a mile away, 'Tommy' jogging along in the shaking shafts quite contentedly. Tea was ready—bush tea, but with various remnants of civilisation, as rolls, butter, chops, and so on. Nevertheless, it was fully two years since I had camped out, and I got to my spring-cart bed as soon as possible. Here I had the satisfaction of discovering that the cart was about three inches too short, so that I could not stretch my tired limbs. The result was that I gave myself cramp almost nightly by pushing my feet against the boards.

Presently the lightning flashed, then the thunder roared, the wind blew a hurricane, the rain came down a deluge; everything was carried away, canvas covering,

blankets, and the rest. We retreated in disorder to an inn opposite, where I lay till morning, a prey to parasites.

The day broke splendidly, and there were just enough luxuries remaining for breakfast. We soon repaired damages, and were off before 7 A.M. We struck into the Mudgee road. Now the Mudgee road after wet weather is an experience, but after about eight weeks' almost uninterrupted rain it is indeed a thing to wonder at. The road lies low, and traverses valley land, ground of which the bottom or foundation is, as draymen call it, rotten. Dispersed variously over the entire length of this part of the road, lie sloughs of despond, once peat, now black mud and water, several feet deep. This is the main road.

As we pick our careful way along, with our light load, in each and every one of these 'sloughs' we find entombed drays, resigned for the present to their fate. Wiser men have driven their drays off the road, and, camped upon a sound bit of ground, await under tarpaulin the advent of better weather. One man remains with the dray, the rest debauching in the convenient roadside public-house, always near at hand. But the struggles of those who have ventured on the treacherous trap, and want to get on, the cursing, whip-cracking, strainings of the bogged ones, form another experience. See, with fore-part buried axle-deep in mud, and hind-part raised high on solid ground, a monster dray loaded with tons of wool! A united team of six-and-thirty bullocks are patiently lending their united strength in order to procure its extrication. Each

animal, leaning stolidly forward, lays its whole weight against the yoke, adding its hundredweights of steady pressure to the rest, all concentrated upon the bebogged dray,—say fifteen tons of dead pull. *Something* must go, or if not, the unwilling monster tears up the rotten ground in front, and is so dragged through. It is wonderful with what persistent perseverance those stupid-looking bullocks go through their work. Not so the quicker-nerved and more sensitive horse. We came upon another bog half a mile farther on, with another entrapped dray, which enabled us to see the difference between horses and bullocks.

Now I do not doubt that when a dray is getting into difficulty,—I mean when there is a very heavy pinch, but the wheels are still in motion,—a team of horses may be started at a run, and made to carry the dray triumphantly through with a rush; but, once fast, bullocks are incomparably superior. The horses cannot be induced to *begin* to pull together. One makes a wild rush, and perhaps carries away a trace, another or two do the same; then, when the others set at it, the first ones jib; or if by dint of coaxing, whipping, and good judgment, they are got to give one pull together, most likely the great jerk of their rush into the collar breaks something. At this bog we had now reached, a team of twenty-six horses were harnessed to the dray; but they had made their effort, seemingly, and were straggling all over the road, jibbing and what not. Horses for pace on a good road,—horses, because they can carry their food with them, in the concentrated form of corn; but bullocks for obstinate endurance.

In such emergency the fable of the bundle of sticks carries all before it.

Why, then, are horse teams increasing and bullocks going out of date? For the very reasons given above,—the roads are improved, and being more improved daily. No team of horses could ever have pulled a few tons up Wyagdon or Monkey's Hill as they were twenty years ago. Then time is becoming more valuable. A good team of horses will do, perhaps, sixty miles in three days, maybe even more. A bullock team takes ten days. Nor is that all: let the two teams start together in fine weather, and the horses have finished the journey on the third day. On the fourth or fifth or sixth comes bad weather, when the dray with bullocks is bogged for a month. Nevertheless, bring them to grief together, and let it be a steady pull or a dash, and then I back the bullocks.

Somehow or other, in spite of the wretched road, we reached 'Creapan Creek,' and here upon a pleasant spot we camped. We had, indeed, a good time. We had bought fresh beef and new bread, and had a clear, calm, fine night after our hard day's work. Soundly we slept; at least *I* did. 'Up in the morning early,' and away—away to repeat our yesterday's experiences. There were similar soft roads, hard swearings, and public-houses—the latter planted invariably in juxtaposition to the worst sloughs of despond.

At that Creapan Inn we had provided ourselves with certain luxuries, so we could halt at noon-time with some expectation of enjoyment. And, indeed, we had the most tender lamb chops I have ever eaten, for which

be blessings on the head of the landlady of the Creapan Creek Inn! We neared Champions presently, a great, staring, red-brick place, which alarmed us; and although the clouds gathered, and a mighty blackness upon the face of the heavens betokened a great gathering again of the waters, we hurried on, much delayed, however, by the insane conduct of the roadmakers, who did evil that good might come. Then the rain came down, and we toiled on, weary, wet, and mud-bespattered. At last we reached an 'accommodation house'—so called, doubtless, on account of a complete absence of all accommodation. However, as it thundered, flashed, rained, and blew, we were indeed glad to shake down even there, and especially glad of a glass of really good hot grog.

We shook down unpleasantly; we shook down with our tired horse, who had much the best of it, in a slab stable. The floor was soft, wet mud, and besides our horse and two others, we had for company, dogs and poultry. We rose on the first decent pretext for doing so. The storm had passed, and we went on, not even waiting for breakfast.

In the course of raids that evening at the Accommodation House upon the whisky bottle, I made the acquaintance of a literary bullock-driver. He was a man of superior intelligence, and really well read. In Colonial affairs past and present, the spirit of the past, Wentworth and Lang, and the party feuds of to-day, he utterly bewildered me by his clever remarks. But he had a marked weakness for the gloomy side of things, and gloated over his abundant knowledge of the early misfortunes of his native land. He emphasized each

fire, murder, and sudden death. He particularly enjoyed the history of one Lynch, with which he favoured me. Lynch was a gentleman who adopted the profession of wholesale murderer, with varied proclivities of hardly a less criminal nature. Also he related the true and authentic history of that very eccentric ghost, who seated himself upon a rail fence, somewhere upon the Paramatta Road, and gave to an alarmed passer-by an authentic account of all the particulars of a foul murder done upon himself, pointing out the site of the murder, and present position of his own body, whereby he procured, so my informant said, the conviction and hanging of the murderer. For myself, I must say that I should fight shy of that same passer-by on a dark night in a lonely place. I presented the bullock-driver with a volume of Mark Twain's *Innocents at Home*, and suggested for his earnest perusal the life and doings of one Slade, therein told. It must have interested him greatly.

After breakfast that next morning, we soon left the Mudgee road, and turned into the branch one to Hill End. We had been warned that this road was so bad as to be now impassable; and, in truth, the coaches of the mail contractors had been taken off, and a horse post instituted. But we found the road at first, and for some miles, a vast improvement upon the main one which we had left. We were congratulating ourselves upon the circumstance, and anathematizing the usual exaggerated reports of coming difficulties, when we came to 'the Sidling' and the 'Pinch,' parts of a hill called 'Bombady' —word of terror to travellers! To the Pinch we came

first. The Pinch was a descent from our standpoint, a perpendicular one seemingly, or perhaps a little sloped inwards at its base. So, at least, it looked from the top. This was certainly a puzzler. However, by spragging the wheels with a sapling, two of us holding on behind, the third hanging on to the horse's bit, driving it down his throat, we managed to descend. Suddenly we rolled to the off, like a ship which, having surmounted a monstrous head sea, lurches broadside to a big Cape roller, and lies on her beam ends. Our horse, Tommy, staggered, but did not fall. If he had done so, I should have been saved the trouble of writing this, as we should have taken a precipitous leap down into a gorge.

This was the Sidling, and after some experience, I am free to say it was as pretty a piece of Colonial roadway as I have yet met with. A sidling technically is simply the side slope of a hill. Your road winds up a steep mountain, or crosses a deep gorge, quite too steep to attempt to go up or down in a straight line forward. Then you have to skirt round it on the fast-sloping ground. The sidling may be at a slope of three to one, so that, to skirt it, the lower wheel must do all the work, the higher one being almost in the air. Of course, this is done at great risk of toppling over and rolling to the bottom. This risk is greater to a two-wheeled vehicle than to one with four wheels. Now, our cart would assuredly have gone over, save that the place was worse than usual. It had been raining for weeks, and the unmade road gave in on the lower side. With great difficulty we released Tommy, who immediately stumbled, struggled, and slid down the road to the bottom, where

was a running stream and a level piece of green grass. Here he luxuriated, raising his head from time to time, no doubt to indulge in pleasant criticism upon our conduct. We three bipeds held a consultation. It was but twenty miles round by Mudgee and Sofala, but then we *couldn't* turn back, because we couldn't turn the cart round; and even if we could, there was 'the Pinch' to meet. A week or so, if it did not rain any more (which it did, by the bye, harder than ever), would dry the road to its original hardness, when we could gradually raise the off-wheel and fill in the rut. But to camp there, with one day's provisions only, for a week, which might mean a month, was rather awkward. So we sat down, and I served out grog.

At last James had an idea—it came from the sailor portion of his experience, I suppose. Running a strong rope—*Mem.* Never travel in the bush without 'handy' accessories, hammer, nails, rope, etc.—inside the frame of the cart on the high side, and fastening each end to a long rope outside to serve as a guide, we took the long piece up the hill to a gum-tree and took a double turn round it. By this means we kept a strain on the cart, which prevented its toppling over. Then, one in the shafts, one with his shoulder to the embedded wheel, which preferred reclining on its boss to revolving on its axle, one holding on to the round turn above, we moved the thing at last. Slowly and painfully we progressed. Then, shifting the guy-rope from tree to tree as circumstances required, struggling, perspiring, and panting, we reached the bottom at last, after some hours' exertion.

Tommy, having had enough grass, was staring and capering exultingly. Then we toiled on, crossing uncrossable creeks, escaping being bogged when we were 'bound' to be bogged — thanks to Tommy. The greater the difficulty, the more fiercely he strained at the collar. Now on his knees, now on his nose, but never flinching, he struggled on till we made 'Upper Pyramul.' A libation to thee, and to all thy race for thy sake! A month since a well-fed, well-groomed, and stabled horse, easily worked and well treated, you never shirked through all that heavy journey, and if you lost a stone or two in weight, never lost heart! This time, after such a day's toil, you danced out of the cart when released, and pirouetted like a two-year-old.

Now we were upon golden ground—Upper Pyramul, a town of surpassing interest. It is situated upon one of the hills which enclose the river, and has had more or less to do with diggings and diggers. It consists of a public-house and butcher's shop combined on one side of the way, a general store and post-office in the same hands on the other. It has, besides, a national school, and a dozen of the usual elegant private dwellings. There are a large number of dogs, a number of children, and several men and women in this town.

The men find ample occupation in the task of smoking and lounging over gates and fences outside the public-house; inside it, doing the same over the bar, with the additional exertion of raising a tumbler to their lips with tolerable frequency. The women shout at one another from their house doors, finding, in these small places, the public-house convenient too. The children

gape, stare, get into every one's way, quarrel, and make friends and mud pies at discretion. The dogs—ah! the dogs work; all day long in formidable pack they are engaged in hunting cattle or hounding horses with or without riders; after dark, they indulge in personal encounters, and vie with each other in making night hideous.

This is said to be a wonderful country, and it must be. The people in it—in the *country*, I mean—seem to live without doing anything. Rarely do you see any one working, and if you do, he is working as though he never had worked before and never meant to do it again. The men lounging in groups about the store or public-house often talk of doing something—generally some time to-morrow, when they mean to try a horse or shoot at something or other.

At Upper Pyramul I had expected to meet a friend. There was no sign of him, however, and I had to send to 'Lower Pyramul,' some twelve miles off, where he was duly found. Having joined me, we set off for Lower Pyramul, along a pleasant slope sidling the mountain, and leading one into a pleasant-looking valley, backed with rugged mountains. The river Pyramul meandered through this valley, the green of its banks having everywhere disappeared, to give place to the dull, broken brown of earth, gravel, and boulders, turned up where the diggers had been at work. We enjoyed that walk very much.

Who knows Lower Pyramul? Lower Pyramul is 'Sharpe's,' and Sharpe's is a public-house! The wonder is how it got there, and *why* it got there. You can

certainly reach various places from it, if the Pyramul Creek is not flooded. Amongst these are Hill End, Tambaroora, Louisa Creek, and others, all famous gold fields. It was upon Louisa Creek that the great surface nugget was found. But Pyramul is not on the direct road to anywhere in particular.

The country is fine and picturesque. The creek wanders at will through what was its green valley, cradled by steep hills, which now close in and drive the water foaming through a narrow gorge, now spread wide apart, and give the lagging stream time to deposit the gold which it has hurried from the hills miles away. 'Old Boiga,' the flat-topped volcanic head of the rugged range of broken mountains of the Pyramul, frowns sternly down upon the valley. The mountain has by no means a good character, and all despond when 'the Boggy' is heavily cloud-capped. The flats for miles along this creek are gold-bearing, and are burrowed and honeycombed by years of mining. They are now chiefly left to the Chinese, who here, at any rate, seem a most industrious, steady-working, contented race, satisfied with hard work and hard fare, taking their losses philosophically, and keeping their gains away from the public-house. They run risks with their work, too, in erecting dams across the stream. These dams are sure to be carried away in case of flood, but they take the chance of that. These very Chinamen of whom I speak have been washed out *four* times in one year, and have then quietly set to work again upon the task of reconstruction.

I was much interested in the operations of a consider-

able body of men, representing what was then known as the 'Pyramul Sluicing Company.' This company had secured a considerable area of ground—in fact, one of the alluvial flats on the creek, which had been but little worked, and the men were making a 'race,' or artificial canal or drain, to bring water from up the creek, in order by pouring it down upon the lower ground to wash away the soil to the rock, and leave the gold behind. This company collapsed, however, like so many others.

Four days at even the best bush inn are enough. One begins to long for more air than is to be got in a bedroom twelve feet by eight, with one window of two panes, which, mayhap, will not open; or if it does, opens within two feet of the ground, in the back garden, and is resorted to at once as an entrance and exit for puss and her many friends. The manufacture, too, of the most varied oaths becomes monotonous to the accustomed ear.

The morning which we had fixed upon for our departure was dull and sombre. Boiga, when not altogether hidden in cloud, looked black indeed. Soon after daybreak it rained hard. We waited; the clouds 'lifted' presently, and we set off. At less than one hundred yards from 'Sharpe's,' we had to cross the Pyramul creek, and ere we were well over, it was raining again, but we did not turn back. The rain came down faster.

'How grand old Boiga looks under his cloudy headdress!' was all we said. It rained harder yet. A long silence.

'Getting wet, George?'

'Rather.'

A longer silence.

'Look ahead, there! see that great mob of kangaroos!'

Some fifty or sixty of them were skirting a hill in front of us, travelling at a great pace, in a straight line, at nearly equal distances apart. We raised a shout; they stopped to gaze a moment, and then went on the faster. It rained harder still, and soon the road was a plain of running water. We dashed on through it, meeting many kangaroos, but we shouted no more. I have been in rain before, and I have often thought myself 'wet through.' I never was before that day, however, for there was always *some* dry spot about me: now there was none. It was no longer raining, but the heavens were discharging sheets of water. The rain effected an entrance through our weak defences at the crown of the hat, dripped down our faces, ran down back and front, flowed down legs, and poured out of boots.

We had left Pyramul at ten o'clock; at eleven, our matches were useless, and smoking—that priceless solace to tramps—impossible. At one o'clock we squashed down that tediously long hill into Green Valley, really a beautiful bit of landscape at any other time. At two we marched deliberately through the river breast-high, and through a series of swollen tributaries thereafter; and walked like half-drowned rats into Tambaroora at half-past four. Such another walk I never had, nor wish to have. Boots came off a bit at a time. But bed! yes, bed at 4.30 P.M. was delicious! Three glasses of brandy each we poured down our throats, and paid

twelve shillings for the medicine. I fell asleep—for we were wearied out utterly—in one moment, I believe, after that. We rose unwillingly to dinner about ten in the evening. Oh, what a dinner was that! Reduced to the commonplace, I fancy it was a rather tough turkey; but the rump-steak was glorious,—it always is in the bush,—and the champagne, at twenty shillings a bottle, was simply nectar! I daresay it was very inferior stuff. Then we went to bed again. We were all wearing the landlord's clothes. We breakfasted at 11 A.M. next morning, and then got clothes from *the* store, for which the bills came to £16. I had a favourite knife, a relic of the first great Exhibition. I have it now; but then it was in a strong morocco case. The case came out of my pocket on that fatal day in shreds.

Every other one who goes 'that way' describes Tambaroora.[1] My idea of the place is that it is just like any other rapidly-risen digging-town in New South Wales, only it is upon fairly level ground—a great advantage over most gold-yielding places. It consists of a long, straight road, fairly good, thanks to the Commissioner and Macadam, with plenty of 'digging' evidences, in the

[1] I wonder what civilised English men and women think of our native names: Tumberumba, Wallamoloolu, Karrabarrabri, Wallamaloolurang, for instance. They are soft enough to pronounce, nevertheless. Try them. How the liquid Wallamaloolu slips off the tongue; how soft is Woolloommoolloo (properly pronounced as Wullumullu), Paramatta, and so on! Their music, too, is sweet. No one has said so hitherto, but *I* say it. Monotonous it is, all being played out on one octave. I have heard a dozen girls, with the devil's beauty at least, if no other, softly singing together their few notes, and I have listened in pleased surprise, and have thought that those girls, with those soft, telling voices, might be put to better purpose.

shape of mounds of red clay, smoky chimneys, tail races, and machinery of all kinds.

All the way from Tambaroora to Hill End, this good, level, macadamized road extends, with evidences of civilisation along the entire route. Approaching Hill End, the suburbs (suburbs to a town of twelve months' existence!) are marked by second-class lodging-houses, eating-houses, and, of course, public-houses. The central town may be said to begin with a fine brick hotel, fit for Sydney, but built a year too late; for even now, as we enter, the mania is subsiding and the fall in stock beginning. This inn was really let at a fabulous rental ere it was built, but the tenant has jibbed, and there it stands, a monument of hasty speculation. At the time it was commenced, accommodation could not be got. Beds were nightly made up upon tables, floors, billiard-tables, etc.; and, as usual, people thought the rush would last for ever. Now, however, as we arrive, the place is thinning, and the collapse is at hand. For Hill End, doubtless, the good time will return; but it will be long before extra trains, extra coaches, and city hotels are required again. This wonderful town, with its thousands of inhabitants, sprang up in twenty-four hours, as it were, and it is utterly unwholesome to live in. Its situation is high, its air bracing; but it has no drainage and no sanitary regulations, and it has been a hotbed of sickness in consequence.

In the afternoon of the day of our arrival, we visited Hawkins Hill, looked at the rich claims in the lime, saw the rich stuff, half gold, half quartz, from Krohman's strong boxes, and wondered not at the 'rush,'

which was now just past its height. Returning, we met our old friends the circus men, their gorgeous chariot, six white horses, and splendid dresses all a little the worse for travel since I had seen them last. What more? Who cared where the pioneer diggers planted their mud huts? The result to-day is that Hill End is a dirty little town, with narrow, huddled-up streets, having some good, substantial buildings, and many straggling outskirts, but with no public buildings worthy the name. The narrow ways are alive with men a-foot and a-horse; but there are very few women, in the streets at least. There is an admirable spirit of independence about the shopkeepers. I tried two of the stores. In one I had my hair cut.

Said the operator, 'Hair getting grey, sir.'

I replied with dignity, 'Please to cut my hair.'

He suggested that I need not be offended, which he called 'scotty.' At another I got a watch-glass.

The watchman said, 'I suppose, sir, you are aware that this is only a second-class watch, a Geneva—in fact, a'—

I said abruptly, 'I asked you for a watch-glass.'

The hint was quite thrown away. He proceeded at once to put to me a series of searching inquiries as to where I had been and where I was going, and advised me to purchase some tobacco.

We found good accommodation at Weir's Hotel, in the main street of Hill End; but although there was still much bustle and excitement, a collapse was coming—in fact, had come already at headquarters. A 'venture' which would have commanded success in

Sydney but a week or two since, could not be 'floated' now.

The rain which had so worsted us had deluged the country: the rivers Turon and Macquarrie were in high flood, and we could not get forwards; nor could we have got back had we wished it, for the Green Valley was flooded behind us. So we had to wait a while where we were. However, under the guidance of a friend, our time was profitably occupied. We visited the world-celebrated claims at Hill End, and saw at various points that narrow vein of quartz out of which the few were making fortunes. Tales of the pluck shown by Krohman, Holterman, Bragg, Brown, Porter, and many others, abound. For years some of these men 'stuck to it,' sold their furniture and effects, starved themselves, worked for scanty wages four days a week in order to get the means to go on with their own claims for the other two; and their wives helped them, encouraging them to persevere. I know one case, at least, told me by the man himself, where he was 'dead beat,' home and hope both being gone. He told his wife he would 'give it best,' leave the place, and begin the world again somewhere else. She wouldn't let him do so, but, as he said, 'hounded' him on again. And they had their reward. The vein was reached, the quartz raised, and with the first crushing came a fortune.

We saw the great lumps of stone, the treasures of the vast, massive iron chests, banded and padlocked, waiting to be crushed. There were blocks of quartz a man could hardly lift, streaked and glittering with gold,—this one, in shape a slab, a foot thick and four feet long, mayhap

showing a seam of gold a thumb wide running its entire length; this, a boulder in shape, all knobs and excrescences of gold. These were the picked specimens, those we had read of, where a few tons of stone turn out their hundreds or thousands of ounces of gold. We were shown also a cake of gold like an exaggerated bun, the result of a late crushing. It looked dull and brassy, and was not to be compared in appearance to the mixture in the natural stone.

CHAPTER XIV.

BUSH WANDERINGS.

More of the Gold Fields—A Dangerous Ferry—Chambers Creek—A 'Plant' in the Mining Districts—A Thunderstorm—Wretched Accommodation — Bathurst — Macquarrie Plains Station — Sydney again—Holidays—The Temperature of New South Wales—Fishing Excursions.

NEXT morning we determined to try to cross the Turon. Hill End, properly so called, is the termination or end of the hill, and the Turon river washes it. The Turon and Macquarrie rivers join, perhaps half a mile lower down, at Hawkins Hill, a place to be remembered—a place, indeed, to think of and to dread. We transformed Tommy into a pack-horse. He took it quite good-humouredly, and calmly slid his two and a half miles down the hill, chiefly seated upon his haunches. We walked down upon our heels, stopping repeatedly to relieve our wearied calves, which threatened cramp at intervals, so steep was the descent. I believe an occasional tendency to leap madly out of bed in the small hours, stamp furiously about the room, and return to bed with a limp, dates from that day. All the way there were claims. Can any amount of eventual gold recompense a weary workman for a daily

toil up and down that hill? At last we reach the bottom and the Turon river. 'Bragg's,' an inn of moderate pretensions but local celebrity, stands there. The Braggs took early residence, and have made their 'pile.'

To-day the Turon is again fordable, and we see the first party cross. There has been great traffic over this river ever since the 'rush,' now two or more years ago; yet we find the accommodation for crossing simply a broken-down, flat-bottomed tub, which in its prime must have been unsafe. To this thing we trust ourselves to cross a swollen, turbulent, rapid river, still much flooded. The tub takes advantage of every eddy and whirl to escape the control of the boatman, resigning itself complacently to be twisted and twirled hither and thither. We crossed our hundred yards or so of muddy torrent, safe from all save mortal terror. We landed; and a man who had been gravely contemplating our passage, said to me,

'Somebody'll be drownded here.'

I answered, 'Yes.'

If he were awaiting a catastrophe, and had patience, he is rewarded now; for I read, some few months ago, the account of an inquest held upon the body of the ferryman, drowned in crossing.

Tommy distinguished himself in this passage. A rope had been fastened halter-fashion to him and taken across; this was to be gradually hauled on from the far side, and Tommy 'bustled' into the water from the near one, when he must literally 'follow his nose.' But he despised all these arrangements. Looking con-

temptuously round, he set off down the ten feet of shingle as hard as he could go, took a flying leap into the river, and swam across like a hero before the men could tighten the rope. Then he landed, shook himself, and looking complacently round, submitted to be re-packed.

Next followed more climbing, with more cramp, to Chambers Creek and Root Hog—a weary, weary tramp: We prepared to camp out. Two soldier-ants did me the favour to sting me as I lay down. I got up again, and performed a favourite break-down ere choosing quite another sod for my resting-place. Then we all fidgeted, groaned, slapped at mosquitoes, and brushed off imaginary insects until morning. We rose *very* early, much refreshed, but without much sleep.

At Chambers Creek I saw rich claims and poor ones; claims that had struck gold, claims that had not; claims registered for more capital and for less water; shafts perfect and plumb, shafts deserted and caving in already; old crushing-machines worn out, new crushing-machines never finished. And then 'I comed away'—such a weary way back again! Hill End seemed an old friend, our inn a palace. One day was given to rest and recreation, then a tramp back to Lower Pyramul. The recreation consisted, if I remember rightly, in supporting the inn doorpost, and supervising an auction sale in the middle of the street opposite the inn. The auctioneer sold many odd things,—for example, one hundred goats for 2s. 6d. The buyer had to go out to Root Hog and *catch* them. Some shares in a mine at Iron Bark were sold for a few shillings; and the

purchaser, a friend of mine from Sydney, sold them for about £300 in a day or two.

The walk back to Pyramul was a supreme contrast to the walk from that place. It was one of the hottest days I ever felt. We kept profound silence from sheer exhaustion, and almost wished, I think, for a repetition of the deluge. We saw no kangaroos, who were wiser than we, and shunned the great heat. We watched old Boiga, who never seemed to grow any nearer; and after believing that each of the last half-hundred turns would bring us in, sighted the creek, and arrived. This road is uninteresting, save for the lofty Boiga and the extensive view obtained from the heights on the Pyramul side of the Green Valley, where we made our noonday camp. The road, with praiseworthy but provoking perseverance, mounts the very highest height ere it condescends to think of coming down into the valley. One has therefore a changing and extensive view of many miles of rolling hills and plains.

The weather was still unsettled, and light and shadow, that great but in New South Wales rare beauty, was added to the scene by the driving clouds.

My friend having a holiday for Christmas, decided to return with me to Sydney, whither I now proposed going, to come back afterwards and work out my tour. In two days we had inspected the Sluicing Company afresh, and were ready. But Tommy was absent. Every morning but this morning had he come at daylight for his feed of corn. Now, he came not. It was a 'plant,' clearly. This might be called the centre of the 'plant' district. Some one kindly takes

away your horses, and plants them in an obscure and more or less inaccessible valley, where you cannot find them. You lose a week, and then offer a reward, when, lo! some lucky bushman brings them in next morning. He has dropped upon them over yonder, thought they looked like yours, and run them in; has not heard even of a reward until he enters the inn. He gets it, though. I offered £1 at once, and the horse was back again in time for an afternoon start. We knew to a moral certainty who played us this trick, but had no proof.

But Tommy played us a trick on his own account before we got away, about the only bit of wilfulness he was ever guilty of. He was harnessed, and in his cart, standing quietly waiting at the inn door for a start. I called James into the house to bring out something. He was not absent thirty seconds, and when he came out Tommy and cart were gone. James ran to the corner, whence he could see one hundred yards each way, but no Tommy was in view. In half an hour we found him—quite off the track, the cart jammed between two gum saplings, but nothing injured. It was four o'clock when we started, with intention of striking the Bathurst Road. We were told we could not miss our way as there was but the one track; so, of course, we lost ourselves upon another before we had travelled half a mile. We soon found our road again; luckily, the track we took led to a farm homestead, not half a mile out of the way. At six o'clock we struck the Bathurst road at a place called Hawkin's Public-house, and pushing on other two miles, camped for the night on a green plain, with good water. We drew up in the

neighbourhood of a grand white gum-tree, and prepared our beds, tea, etc. At dusk, we noticed the arrival of a great many dimly-seen birds, each greeting us with a jeering, short chuckle, ere he resigned himself to slumber on some branch of the big gum-tree. But we had no idea what awaited us, or, late as it was, we should have removed half a mile away. Those jocose birds, a thousand strong, saluted us *before* daylight, say about 3.30 A.M., with a laughing chorus of the most terrible proportions. 'Hum, hum, hum! Goggle, goggle, goggle! Chuckle, chuckle, chuckle! Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!' This continued until we were completely roused. Then they retired and took up various stations in the distance, screaming with fiendish laughter.

But we were not so very much grieved, as we had something like a race before us. My friend and a companion were to start this morning and walk; we were walking too, but our pace was regulated by the cart, theirs by themselves only. They had largely threatened to 'fetch us up' by ten or eleven o'clock this morning, but they could not breakfast and start before seven, and we were on the road at ten minutes to six, besides having put some ten miles behind us last night. Now, with our early start, and our innocence of what was before us, we formed visions of reaching Bathurst that night, although forty miles away—bush miles, too! Still, twenty miles in six hours brings the time to only twelve o'clock noon, and the other twenty in six hours more would finish the journey before it was absolutely dark. Tommy could do it, we knew, if the roads were but tolerably bad. But unfortunately they were *not;* they were *in*tolerably bad.

The rain had been here also, and the road resembled that I have already described in my account of the outward journey.

I have mentioned Monkey's Hill. This was my last crossing, a low road being opened on the next day. I suppose no one ever crosses Monkey's Hill now. I take it that Monkey's Hill means the whole height to the top of the range, but a particularly steep, rough bit gets the name. Down this we descended in two hours, the distance being, perhaps, an eighth of a mile. We passed two drays on the hill altogether deserted; their loading covered with a tarpaulin, certainly, but not a man or dog even to watch them. Then from the bottom of this steep hill we mounted up and up till we were far higher than Monkey's Hill, or any of the range behind us. Yesterday's excessive heat had had its effect. As we climbed the ranges, thinking each spur the top one, only to arrive there and see another still higher in the distance ahead, the landscape grew dull, the sun clouded, mists dimmed the distant peaks, and wind sighed through the still leaves, which began to rustle dismally. In the north-east there formed a blue-black cloud the size of a man's hand, which, although the wind just now had chopped round to the southward, and blew coldly in sudden puffs, steadily rose up against the breeze and covered the northern sky. The lofty mountain-tops showed out from their gauzy robe of mist from time to time, blue and weird in the watery gleam of a sudden sunbeam, backed by a great ink-black cloud, heavy and massive like a solid body. Incessant thunder rolled sullenly in the distance, and bright flashes of

running fire harassed the heavy cloud unceasingly. There was a dead stillness around us. No sound of bird or beast or insect could be heard. All were hushed in deadly fear.

James looked scared, and I did not like the scene; it was much too grandly solemn for our present mood. The highest point of a mountain range, with a storm like this at hand, is awe-inspiring, if not alarming. It became a race between us and the coming storm, as to which should reach and pass the highest top of the mountain first. It was a drawn fight. We struggled on silently, and should have won our battle with the rising north-east storm but for treachery. The fair and false south wind deceived us. It suddenly came down upon us—not so suddenly but that we could see the great forest bend low before its advent, bowing in a distinctly marked line, advancing at a rate of one hundred miles an hour; not so suddenly but that we could hear the crack of breaking branches, and the thud of heavy timber hurled to earth; but suddenly too, for all this lasted not many seconds. It was upon us with a thick shower of twigs and leaves, and a downpour of hailstones as big as marbles. We tried to draw the cart under a projecting rock, to shelter behind it; but the gale drove at us from all points of the compass at once, as it seemed. Through it all we could see the nearer approach of the streaming, never-ceasing lightning, and hear the constant roar of the heavy thunder which followed every flash.

Then good Tommy had enough of it. He got frightened, and tried to dash off, cart and all. He gave

us enough to do, luckily, for we forgot to be afraid; we could just control him, but could not stop him, and as we got to the extreme height the storm centred there too. There was a blaze of light, and artilleries of thunder actually never ceasing; for ere one peal had died away, another and another were upon us as we staggered blindly down the mountain. The storm was brief as furious, travelling southward as fast as the wind went in other and all directions. The hail became rain, a torrent rushed down the centre of the road, the air cooled again, the sky brightened, and the thunder grumbled in the distance.

Then the sun shone out, and lo! nothing remained to mark the storm track, save pools of water and fresh-broken branches strewing the road. The birds began to sing, the earth offered up its incense, and the day was fine. But I do not want that walk again; I think I should even prefer the Tambaroora one. No doubt wild mountain ranges, inky clouds, perpendicular, horizontal, and diagonal lightning, wild wind, crashing trees, and pelting hail are all very grand, and one likes to have seen them when the storm is over; but I do not want any more of it myself. I don't think James does either. Tommy, I venture to assert, does not.

We crossed the Turon by a long, irregular crossing, diagonal to the stream. It must be difficult to find. We followed close to a native on horseback, and though the river was high, got over easily, just wetting the floor of our cart. Across the river and from a height of twenty feet or so, an inn looked down upon us—once, no doubt, a place of some pretension; now its glory has departed.

Already 'Botany Bay' has its memories, and in them is an old country. No longer the squatters drive their wives and families in their carriage and pair, two or three hundred miles by easy stages—thirty miles to-day, forty to-morrow, as the roads serve and the inns have reputation. Now the family remain in Sydney, and the squatter runs up by rail and Cobb & Co. to Mudgee in forty-eight hours; so the old houses deteriorate. Two out of every three, at the very least, are closed, and are now but weather-worn wrecks, roofless and windowless. The third is but a bush public-house at best. No more six o'clock dinners; no more expensive wines and cigars. I question whether a bottle of drinkable champagne or a decent cigar is to be found in a dozen of them. How I hate those bush public-houses, especially at meal times!

We had to put up with this one, however, for an hour or two, until our companions arrived. They had seen the storm on the mountains some ten miles back, and had waited, and on Monkey's Hill had passed a team of two or three horses struck dead by the lightning.

We fled the house as soon as possible, and next morning breakfasted in the cool bush luxuriously on tea, sardines, and dry bread baked at the Pyramul. And now, as we approached Bathurst, the country opened up and improved at every step, till we made the wide plains, with their cultivated lands and noble homesteads. We were leaving the barren gold grounds, and re-entering the limits of civilisation. Throughout all the gold-bearing districts the characteristics of the country are similar—everlasting ranges of hills, constantly recurring creeks and rivers; the hills full of quartz

reefs, some of which bear broken evidence of having been prospected, but thousands of reefs, enough to keep thousands of prospectors at work for thousands of years, untouched.

The creeks are all mad, brawling streams, and have been at work, who knows how many centuries, stealing the gold from the mountains, and bearing it down to the alluvial flats.

A marked change, indeed, are the Bathurst Plains; but another more marked change occurs here—there is not a single public-house (at least there was not three years ago) between our night's resting-place and Kelso. Seventeen miles of Australian road and no public-house! The Turon was 'up' again and the bridge down, so we could not go into Bathurst; wherefore we made for Kelso, a sort of suburb to the town, but for us on the right side of the swollen river, and near the station, too—Macquarrie Plains, which was then the station for Bathurst, the few remaining miles of easily constructed railway seeming a complete stopper to progress. At Kelso, at an inn kept by Mr. Vines, we dined. Mr. Vines positively had the good sense to suggest to us that we should probably prefer dinner in a private room. I left horse, cart, and man at Kelso, intending, as before stated, to return and finish my trip; but money interests were everywhere waning, and I no longer felt sufficient excitement on the subject, and so never enjoyed any more of the purposed travellings. I lent my belongings instead to an acquaintance going farther south. He lost my horse, and eventually disposed of my traps for about half the estimated value. I never saw Tommy again.

That evening my companion and I tramped to Macquarrie Plains Station. I was quite astonished at the traffic between this station and Bathurst. The nine miles of road were constantly covered with teams, vans, great drays, and lighter traffic. I have been long enough in New South Wales, one would have thought, to have overcome the possibility of astonishment; but still I always am surprised at the business going on between Sydney and the interior. To be sure, one has to remember that the consumption of every kind per head of population here is about double that at home. Still the result surprises.

This road traverses nine miles of the flat Bathurst Plains; it has never been 'made,' and on the occasion of our tramping it was some six to eight inches deep in dust, and the walk the most clouded one I ever took, I think. As this Macquarrie Road Station is of only temporary importance, and will dwindle into a second-class one on the opening of the line into Kelso, I suppose it was not considered worth while to make a decent approach to it. The existing one seems made in order to give the traveller a perfect acquaintance with the residence of Mr. Lee, a gentleman of note in those parts, a wealthy breeder, and one of the right sort. Still I have seen more picturesque residences than this great, staring, red-brick erection, standing sweltering under a blazing sun, on an endless brown plain, with not a tree within a mile of it. And when one is taken, upon a flat, dreary, dusty road, some three miles out of one's way to examine every side of this house, one becomes angry.

Arrived at last at the station, there is a rush for tickets. The train is filled to overflowing, for it is Christmas Eve. All tried to sleep in our carriage, but none succeeded. What a bilious, red-faced, intrusive party is the sun, as he darts his ill-timed glances through your carriage window, just as, in spite of all, you are forgetting where you are!

'Penrith,' with a morning glory on its plains; 'Paramatta,'—'An hour late, gentlemen;' 'Burwood,'—'Tickets, please;' Sydney—a hansom—a bath—and six hours of oblivion.

No doubt holiday-making is more frequent here than in England, but so it ought to be. There is no little exhaustion in bearing a heat of 100° in the shade day by day for some six months. This present summer the thermometer has ranged between 90° and 112° in this colony, with hardly a day of rain to cool the air. While I write, at 10 P.M. on the 12th April, sitting by a wide-open window, I must keep removing the perspiration from my forehead. April, of course, represents the October of Europe. The nights are almost as hot as the days. The north-east wind dies down at or soon after sunset, and we often pass the whole night in a succession of 'melting moments.' In the higher districts, throughout the mining districts, the sun seems to attain even greater power than in Sydney; but then they have cool nights. The thermometer may touch 112° in the shade at three in the afternoon, but at three in the morning it is down to 70°, and a single blanket is quite comfortable as a covering. Moreover, there are no mosquitoes, therefore no bed-curtains. So

with an open window, and a light westerly morning breeze playing round you, you sleep well, rise refreshed, and take your early morning constitutional in an atmosphere almost bracing, until the blazing sun once more obtains power over his subjugated world. Now, in Sydney, this north-easter tempers the afternoon heat, although scarce perceptibly, and a higher temperature than 100° is rare; but then it fails at seven or eight in the evening, and the whole night passes without a moving breath of air, in a dead heat of 90° perhaps, if the day has been 100°. Nor does any relief come with the morning. Stillness prevails, the heat keeps up, and at 9 A.M. the exhausted bank or Government clerk takes his sweltering way to work. This is the most oppressive hour of the twenty-four. The sun is high in the heavens, and burns down on everything; the lagging north-easter whispers not of deceptive coolness till ten at earliest.

Thus, whilst the tired New Englander enjoys his wholesome rest, the wearied Sydney labourer sits coatless, with his half-roasted womenkind, on the doorsteps of his close dwelling, listlessly gazing at the groups similarly placed around, or quarrelling recklessly here and there, working off the effects of the stimulants exhausted nature has craved from him; the women, the while, mopping their hot faces with their aprons, and keeping up a constant battle with the clouds of mosquitoes which buzz round unceasingly. Yet are they all unwilling to retire to their bedrooms, where a hot, stuffy bed and an intolerably close room await them. The clerk, meantime, lies prostrate upon his verandah chair, fighting the mosquitoes too. At last he retires beaten,

to toss wearily about, until he falls asleep through utter exhaustion, to waken to his hot walk to-morrow. Holidays *should* be plentiful under such circumstances, and we have them. They have come to be too much together, yet as that together is almost entirely in the hot weather, it is perhaps as well. We have, for instance, the Prince's birthday; a long four days at Christmas, giving time for a pleasant, invigorating mountain trip, where it is cool, and there are no mosquitoes at night; the anniversary day, 26th of January; the four days of Easter,—all in the hot months, for March is as hot as any. Many make the mountains their camping-ground on these occasions; many make up camping parties to Middle Harbour or to Broken Bay, on piscatorial pursuits intent, but I think this latter is not often tried a second time, excepting by the enthusiastic few. You have the physical advantages of fresh air and rowing, and the joy of pulling up a 10-lb. schnapper or 30-lb. Jew-fish. Against these advantages you must set the sorrow of losing line altogether from grip of shark, and various other troubles. For example, you hire a big boat, and with two or three 'new chums' set off rejoicing. Now, even if you are a tolerably accustomed boatman, a pull from Sydney to Middle Harbour is no joke under the baking summer sun, and when you arrive you have had enough of it for the day. But you have to begin your day yet, as it were, so you choose your camping-ground, if you are wise, and, making a fire, get your breakfast over. Then you fish. You are lucky or unlucky. If you are lucky, you get more bream than you know what to do with, and a few other fish. You

do not often change your ground. The day passes, a little monotonously at the latter part, and you cook your fish for dinner and tea. If you are fairly fortunate, why, then, you are just shifting your ground all day; and the amusement of letting down a 40 to 100 lb. kellick into six or eight fathoms of water, and hauling it up again at short intervals, may be open to question. If you are unlucky, it is still the same, changing still more frequently, with loss of temper and quarrels 'all round.'

Wearied out, you moor the boat at last, and then there is your rock to sleep upon. Wrapped in your blankets, you throw yourself down to sleep at eight o'clock. Sleep? You cannot sleep! The mosquitoes are simply torturing. After a night of agony, dispirited, jaded, and ill-tempered, it is ten to one you return in the morning. Yesterday morning, every one was eager to be 'picking up sticks' for the fire; cleaning fish was a pleasant amusement. Now, no one seems to care whether there is a fire or not; to clean fish is too disagreeable a job to be undertaken; no one will bale the boat out or swab the seats, and you embark sullenly. The return progress is one continued quarrel. A. *will* steer all the while; B. *must* have the bow oar, when he keeps pulling the boat's head all round the compass; C. has not pulled a stroke, and D. will be dashed if he pull any more. You are at deadly quarrel for days afterwards, until some one discovers that you have been a pack of fools. Well do I remember such a party, and some such return.

We have such a turn-out of people on these

holidays as would astonish any Englishman. Picnics here, there, and everywhere; ten thousand people at this place, seven thousand at that, five thousand at the other, until one would think that every soul of our one hundred and sixty thousand were too few to make up the numbers! Well, we have more money, and certainly think less of its expenditure than they do at home.

CHAPTER XV.

A TRIP TO LAKE MACQUARRIE.

A Bad Start—Wiseman's Ferry—The River Hawkesbury—A Scene on the Mountain—A Tramp—French Leave at the Ferry—A Dismal Journey—Benighted—A Night Alone in the Bush—An Honest Tramp—A Dishonest Servant—Conclusion.

I ACCEPTED a proposal to go on a business visit to Lake Macquarrie two or three years since. Lake Macquarrie is situated upon the coast near Newcastle; it is of considerable extent, and has an outlet to the Pacific capable of admitting coasters of fair size, but the channel is of shifting sand and uncertain. Fish are plentiful, and timber has heretofore been the principal object of traffic.

It is a great coal district, and some day will, for that reason, be a busy place. The route is to Windsor by train, a small town forty miles from Sydney; thence by an old road or track, which for years was the only way by which land communication could be had with the North-West interior. Now there are other ways, of course, but this is even yet the great line by which fat cattle from many a distant station find their way to Sydney. On this trip I had an American tray-waggon

and pair, with tents, etc. This trap had gone on a day or two before me, with orders to the two drivers to get over the Hawkesbury, make for the lake, find a camping-ground, and pitch tents. One of them was then to return to the Hawkesbury for me. Now, to get over the Hawkesbury by the punt at Wiseman's Ferry was often a day's work, sometimes more, as detention and irregularity were the prevailing rule there.

On the second morning I arrived at Windsor at 11.30 A.M. I had a good many 'traps' with me, besides 'tools of trade,' for we were to be away for some weeks. But for this I should have walked. As it was, although I found that not a vehicle was to be had in the town of some three thousand inhabitants, I could not walk. At last I heard a hawker bawling vegetables up and down the place. I hunted him up, and saw that he had a good covered cart and strong horse. I endeavoured to persuade this independent gentleman to take me forwards, but nothing would induce him to leave his *calling*, and I had to listen to his most sweet voice, now near, now far, for several hours. At last we met again, and he then condescended to say that he would take me when he had finished his work, eaten his dinner, and changed his horse. This would be at 6 P.M., and we could then start upon our twenty-four miles' journey.

It was seven before we set off, at a gentle walk, which pace we continued all the way. Fortunately the road is level, and good too in fine weather, so we made our three and a half miles an hour steadily whilst light lasted. But it soon became dark, one of the darkest

nights I ever knew in Australia, where it rarely is what we Europeans call pitch dark. The road was well defined, however, and nothing occurred to interfere with our progress, reduced to some two and a half miles an hour. We passed the Half-way House, now haunted and deserted. It was too dark to see the ghost, however. It seems that, in a general row amongst bushmen or drovers some years before, some one had been murdered. The ghost story was of the usual dimensions, and it had ended in the utter decay of a good property and lands around.

We followed on to the top of the high ridge, whence commenced the steep, long, winding descent to the Hawkesbury. We got out here and lighted our lamp. The road down is after the usual colonial fashion: straight down until you come to a precipice, here build a wall, turn to the right or left; come to another precipice, build another wall, and so on. We could not see the first wall, but when urged to go over it, the horse objected, so we let him 'square' off. We reached the plains below at last, and with them the very worst inn in Australia, I believe. Here we got some bread and cheese and whisky, after long delay, and went to bed. That 'worst inn's worst room,' which has offered abundant warning to so many of us, was not like this room in this inn; I will never believe it. Bah! No respectable Englishman can realize dirt and neglect in a climate such as this. There is a wooden house to begin with, often built 'on the cheap,' out of the American deal first used for emigrant ships' fittings, and every one may fancy what *that* means! Rooms

subdivided into dens of ten feet square by mere American boards; window a foot square, never opened; a shingled roof over all, from the wall plates of which is stretched flapping canvas; a ceiling common to all, so that an ordinary conversation can be heard from one end of the house to the other. You retire wearied at 10 P.M., and by dint of good health, a long drive through fresh air, and a strong night-cap, you live through the horrible smell, compounded of crawling things, want of ventilation, and other people's clothes, until you fall into a heavy sleep. It is useless. At 11.30 comes a long fight—two rooms away—of uncontrolled ill-temper between retiring tipsy landlord and equally tipsy landlady. That over, there comes the entrance into the adjoining room of a couple of retiring draymen, when an interesting but very sanguinary conversation ensues between them until they fall asleep. If *they* are only 'tight,' so much the better, for the sooner silence is obtained. Then comes the united snoring of the sleepers till morning.

Morning! and then one sees what a *lovely* view there is, and what a splendid place this should be! Surely it should be thronged with tourists all the year round! As it is, even the regular road travellers go miles out of their way to shun the place. I threw up the one little window; it banged down again with a shiver. I threw on my clothes and left the house, a seedy, late-houred traveller; I returned out of the embraces of the Hawkesbury a giant refreshed.

I go in to breakfast, and am told it will be ready when the men come in. The men are those who are

at work at the ferry, and those for whom they are at work,—the drovers. They do come in about mid-day. However, as the breakfast was a repast of doubtful character, it did not matter much. I strolled out upon the verandah, and gazed riverward. Now the view from that neglected verandah is magnificent. Anthony Trollope, a shrewd observer truly, though more familiar, perhaps, to us his readers for minute knowledge of men than of scenic effect, has said that the pictures of beautiful scenery nature has given to this same Hawkesbury are equal to the much vaunted shows of Continental Europe. Many more have said or thought so too.

Across that broken wall, the eye wanders over a stretch of rich arable and pasture lands, furnishing a wide margin to the river's windings; deep green or glowing yellow, as the ripening corn or luscious grasses predominate upon that deep, black soil. Then the river, smoothly stealing a broad expanse of sunlit water to the great Pacific. Behind, again, the bold, steep mountain, clothed in green, through which the road shows its bare strip, climbing ever up and up; first a broad road, last a thin, but ever distinctly marked line of brown, traced in and out of the green country.

The sky had seemed dull when first I looked upon it this morning; now, in the brightened daylight, it is cloudless, its deep blue glowing in the sunshine.

All is still as yet; so still that the ripple of the flowing river comes distinctly to my ear. I look long, lost in admiration. What are these? Moving dots scatter themselves over the very summit of the distant road. A

mere cluster of pin points, but moving too, crossing and recrossing each other. They turn into a long bend, and are lost to my view, to shoot out a mile below more clearly defined—flies now in size. What are they? Surely they are too small for sheep, and yet—another long turn, and now they are half-way down the mountain. On they come—individual movement becomes recognisable—a long rolling trot is noticeable. A brief disappearance, and here they are again, and I know them to be a mob of cattle rolling awkwardly but rapidly down the steep road.

Anon the stillness is disturbed. Crack! crack! distinctly comes the sound of angry stock-whip. 'Coo-oo-oo-ey, coo-oo-oo-ey,' *very* faintly comes the war-cry of Australia. 'Coo-oo-ey-ey-ey,' I answer; and a short 'coo-*ey*'—the 'ey' *very* sharp—shows that they too have heard. I rouse the house. Now the crack, crack, comes distinctly to the ear; presently the essential shout and oath disturb the morning stillness. The loud whip wakens an echo soon, and then the mountains round discharge their crackling thunders at the poor beasts, who come bounding down, well knowing the sharp sting which shall greet a laggard.

'Coo-ey, coo-ey,' now unceasingly. The stockmen are impatient for the evidences of civilisation, be they ever so doubtful, and want to see the ferry people turn out. They do, headed by the landlord, who, if he neglect his house, by no means ventures to trifle with the drovers, who pay, he thinks, so much better. Indeed the head-money, on a day like this, is very considerable. Then the mob stop on the wharf, a few making slippery efforts

to escape along the banks, so steep and rough. But soon all are 'yarded'—driven, that is, into a confined space.

The landlord and men now unmoor the barge or punt, and begin to get across the half mile of intervening water. They are over, and the punt alongside the very primitive wharf. Then commences the rushing, shouting, pushing, struggling incidental to the work. All this to get the first bullock or two into the punt; the rest is easy, save that the work is now to prevent too many getting into the punt, and whips are going freely to prevent overcrowding.

Off! and the punt proceeds slowly and with great labour upon its way; then do the bullocks press upon each other, seeking safety together. If only a little roll or lurch should come, this crowding becomes wild, and 'tis well if only one or two lose footing and try the river, to finish their journey alone.

This cargo landed, they are turned into a paddock to await the coming of their brethren. Then follows load after load, the swearing, whip-cracking, an occasional tumbling overboard, continuing until all have crossed. If the day is taken thus, all else must wait, even although they are first arrivals, for the dictum of Mr. Wiseman's ferry at that time was after the Pickford Punch fashion:

'I knows nothin' about no right sides nor no wrong sides, only just you get out of my way.'

I have seated myself on the green bank long ere this, and the circumstances of the crossing are amusing enough. But I cannot see any signs of my buggy, and begin to be anxious. A very decent-looking tramp is

seated near me, looking on. He has a very small 'swag,' and, indeed, a look of poverty; altogether, he gazes rather absently, nor tries in any way to attract attention.

I enter into conversation with him. He is a tramp—he is also a sawyer, and has long worked in the Murrembidgee district; but those ranges are two hundred or three hundred miles away now. He met with a not unusual accident to such men, and is forbidden under pain of death by his medical men to touch that work again for years to come. He had fifteen pounds with him after paying all his debts and doctors 'honourable' when he left; but fifteen pounds, and three hundred miles! It was all gone—the last nine shillings and sixpence for boots to enable him to walk. He was not, however, despondent, and by no manner of means begging, only he is 'stuck' for the coppers to cross the river, and has to go eighty miles farther after that to his friends in Maitland. Talk about pluck! A man already physically injured—guiltless of food since yesterday—not a penny to cross the river with—eighty miles of bush to travel, and yet self-contained, cheerful, and trusting to Providence! Providence came to him, too, although but in the shape of a sinner like myself. I did him a little good, but not half the good he did me. 'Almost' thou persuadest me to be— Like a *man* he answered all my questions. Like a man he took with not much thanks the dinner I sent him up to get at the place, and which, although I paid for it, they gave him outside, because, forsooth, he was a tramp. Like a man, a man with tears in his eyes but firmness in his voice, he said, 'Thank you, sir; anything I can do for you

I will, but let it be something, for I have not begged yet.'

Then we lighted our pipes together, and smoked, quietly watching the manœuvres of the great beasts, and the lesser ones their masters. But time will keep going, and I am becoming very impatient. My buggy, which was to have made morning appearance on the hill-top, where the bullocks took its place, is still conspicuous by its absence, and I am assured in my own mind that one of the never-ending mistakes has occurred. So I determine to go on; but how? Why, easily now; here is my good friend the stranger, the very man I want. See his well-cut head, his open deep-grey eye, his steady look! See the quiet, respectful manner of this sawyer, a man who ought to have a place, and a good one too, in the world!

I make a bargain—a very good one for me, and he too is grateful to the end of our short intercourse. Our bargain suits us both, but it is in my favour. I simply bring down my goods to the river-side where my friend sits, and he undertakes to remain by them until I return or send for them, probably to-night, to-morrow, or to-morrow night. If he does this I will pay him ten shillings, which will find him food to Maitland. I fully explain the situation to him, and the rather quixotic faith I am placing in him. He answers, 'I am no thief,' and I believe him. I then give him five shillings to live upon, and a railway story-book out of my luggage, and go down to the ferry. The last lot of cattle are over, and the boatman is making fast the skiff. I tell him to put me over; he simply says, '—— if I do.' I say

that it is a public ferry, and from six to six he must take over all comers. '—— the public ferry; I won't touch an oar for nobody.' I repeat my threats of penalty. He points with his thumb to the house, 'That's *his* look-out; I won't pull a —— stroke for nobody till I've had my dinner.' He lounged away over the half-mile to the house. Now this man had no doubt been kept long at his hard work, and was entitled to his dinner; but then I wanted to get across; moreover, the drovers were looking on laughing, after having got their beasts into the paddock, and put up the slip-rail. So I walked down to the boat, unmoored her, shipped the paddles, and pulled myself over. I landed, and gave the boat a 'shove off' with my foot. She floated away down stream, the drovers shouting, 'Well done, mate!'

It was now half-past five. All I knew of my route was that I was to go ten miles along the Newcastle road, and then to take the bridle-track to Mangrove Creek. I breasted the mountain with a will. It was two miles on the collar to the top. Half-way up I stopped to breathe, on one of the turns of the road where I had seen the bullocks gallop down this morning. Far away below me was the river; a black speck, some half mile below, was the ferry-boat sailing away seawards. But another black speck with a smaller one in it pushed away from the wharf, and dashed off down the river after the first, I suppose. I turned on with a satisfied smile. I returned by Wiseman's ferry a few weeks later, but never a word did I hear about that boat, and I made no complaint in Sydney, for I thought I had the best of it.

On, and still on, five miles an hour, the rough road leading over unchangingly barren sandstone mountain; now overhanging, on heavy retaining wall, a deep black gully, now driving by shallow excavation through a projecting rock; sometimes broken up into loose boulders and ragged masses of stone, sometimes more broken into sand dust; but always high up amongst the mountains, always exhibiting a huge panorama of wild hill and hollow, with little streamlets a thread wide wandering amongst them, winding their way to the Hawkesbury. Ha! a black snake. There is no time to stop, so he owes his life to my haste. It is just two hours since I left the ferry now, and allowing ten minutes extra for the mountain, I should be at the bridle-track directly; besides, the road has been steadily descending for the last half-hour, and should be approaching the head of some gully.

Here it is, then, a patch of green a hundred feet wide, the road crossing it. Now upon all that ten miles of road I had not seen a blade of grass, nor met a living thing save the black snake. I cross the bridge, and the road begins to rise into sandstone again, but I see no track; and as for inquiring the way, perhaps some time during the week I might be told it, but not to-night certainly. I know that the track must be on the right side of the road, however, so I strike off a hundred yards into the bush to made a detour. Yes, here it is, though poorly defined, and evidently little used. I am getting doubtful as to what I must do, and visions of even Wiseman's trouble me. I plunge into the track, however, and plod steadily onwards. One mile over, at any rate.

How dark it is getting! No wonder; it is eight o'clock, and I can but just see the time. Besides, it never can be very light amongst the gigantic straight trees in this rapidly descending gully. Suddenly I emerge into a green spot ten yards square, free from timber, and here on the grass there is no path at all. I cross this, carefully looking for the path, and lo! a wide beaten track. So my troubles are over; this path will surely take me *there* (wherever that may be). It leads me farther and farther through a swampy wilderness to a great boulder of sandstone, half-quarried to make this very path; it leads me round the boulder, and into the gully again amongst the wet ground and big trees; then it dies out. I realize the agreeable fact that I stand in the dark, here under this lofty shadowing of tree and mountain, in the soft mud; a precipice on my left, where, far below, I hear the brawling of the streamlet; on my right, a rough, steep mountain. When I had reached my camp some days afterwards,—for I did survive after all,—I wrote home the following doggerel verses upon the torn-out leaves of my pocket-book, and as they tell their tale better than I can remember it now, I venture to give them here:—

Pitch-black night,
Not a gleam of light,
Gone the last flicker of day;
The path died out
As I gazed about—
Alas! I had lost my way.

But one resource!
I have matches, of course—
I must trust to their light so fleet;

A flash and a blaze,
As intently I gaze,
And the pathway lies under my feet!

Quickly I went
Till each match was spent—
Too soon I exhausted my store;
Of course with the last
All the brightness past,
And the path disappeared as before.

Sad was my case:
I had come to a place,
More dreary and lorn could not be;
On the left a sharp fall,
On the right a steep wall,
The path but a standpoint for me.

I found a great rock
About nine o'clock,
A 'moist, unpleasant' stone,
But quite a treat
To my weary feet,
And upon it I soon lay prone.

I dare not sleep,
I must vigil keep,
Lest I roll from my rock to the floor;
Soon the knobs on that stone
Seem abrading each bone,
And I drop to my feet once more.

They reckon but ill
Who call our night still,
For 'tis ever alive with sound;
And venomous things,
With buzzing wings,
Are hurrying all around.

Then constant rise
Most startling cries
From those who in night rejoice ;
Then 'possums growl,
And dingoes howl,
And curlew's plaintive voice,

With croaking frogs
In distant bogs,
And cuckoo's startling call ;
And the bray, though rare,
Of the native bear,
With the thud of his sudden fall.

Mosquitoes' hum
Will round you come,
And owls discordant screech ;
You start with fright,
For you feel a bite—
'Tis of slimy, clinging leech.

Of course you quake,
For it may be a snake,
Indeed 'tis most likely to be.
These things I can tell,
And others as well,
For all of them happened to me.

What time soon
The lady moon
Begins slant light to show,
Brightly she shines
On the lofty pines,
Yet it's dark enough down below.

Thud, thud came the drops
From tall tree-tops,
Though only the midnight dew ;

Yet they fall so fast,
That ere night is past
They have pretty well wet me through.

Night's brilliant Queen o'ertops the hills,
And silvery light the gully fills,
As she follows her heavenly way;
She brings to view
Strange things anew,
As though we had ghosts at play.

She casts her light
Through the deep black night,
As she sails there so stately and still;
Ghastly or drear,
Fantastic and queer,
All nature lights up at her will.

Here a great fantastic bough,
Never seen at all till now,
Starts into life—you can scarce tell how—
As mighty giant, with frowning brow,
Cleaving to earth with a flaming spear
A charging horseman; a timid deer,
Which, ere you've mastered the changing sight,
Becomes an angel, clothed in white,
Kneeling to one with a golden beard,
E'en as you look they've disappeared.
See, there! a mother with sleeping child,
A sailing ship on an ocean wild,
A hideous crone, a blushing bride,
Two lovers standing side by side;
A castle—ladies—gorgons dire—
Seas of water—plains of fire;
All of these she conjures now
From two or three leaves and a broken bough.
She paints them all at a moment's glance,
This queen of enchantment and necromance;

Meet what she will with her dainty ray,
She transposes them all in her magic play.

'Tis bitterly cold
As night grows old,
And my patience is all but gone;
Would I could see,
But it must be three—
How slowly the time drags on!

By dis and by dat,
By the crown of my hat,
Faith, the morning's come at last;
'Goroo, goroo!
Oh, what shall I do,'
For joy that this night is past?

Yes, it was true;
Soon the daylight grew,
And I left that most desolate place;
At a quarter-past four
I delayed no more,
For the path I could dimly trace.

All night on my feet,
With nothing to eat,
And wet with the dropping dew;
But I sang on my way
To the opening day,
Ay, and danced on the footway too.

In and out
And round about
A most romantic glen,
And I gaily go
In the morning's glow—
May I ne'er see that pathway again!

But I did not feel strong,
And the miles were long,
As I struggled my anxious way;
I refrained full soon
Both from dancing and tune—
I don't think I whistled that day.

New South Wales
Has wondrous tales
Of its hospitable hosts;
I'll tell you what
I for welcome got
At one of the homes it boasts.

A house I soon saw,
Which of course I made for,
Immediate attention was taken;
At its door stood a man
With a hissing hot pan,
And in it were fried eggs and bacon.

I asked for a drink;
He took some time to think,
As he turned out his eggs from the pan:
'There's a bucket behind,
You can drink if you've mind,'
And he then made his tea in a can.

Loudly I swore
As I turned from that door,
My anger I hardly can tell.
He thrust out his head
As I went, and he said,
'You're welcome to stay there and smell.'*

* Fact. I learned afterwards that this man was a noted character, a selfish miser, who lived alone on a property left him; kept his own fowls, which cost him nothing, and his own pigs, which cost the same.

Weary and worn,
Bedraggled, forlorn,
But hastening onward the more,
I came to the stream,
Some fifty yards beam,
With a boat on the opposite shore!

I cooeyed and called,
I shouted and bawled,
Their supineness was 'shocking to me;'
But help came at length,
With two men of strength,
Who ferried me over that sea.

Here was the road,
Here a landlord abottle,
Of my buggy they nothing had heard;
But I did not care,
I was safe and was 'there,'
And soon they had breakfast prepared.

It was not until noon,
Seeming greatly too soon,
That my man and my buggy arrived;
I slept out that day,
And the next went away,
And so I my troubles survived.

I did not waste the day, though, for I sent off man and horses to Wiseman's for my traps, telling the man that if my tramp were there all right—which I had never for a moment doubted—he was to bring him on, and I would instal him as cook at the camp. It was as I expected; they came together, nothing touched in any way. The tramp seemed to think he had done nothing extraordinary. I suppose he was one of those men who *cannot* be dishonest.

That hill from Mangrove is terrific. Wiseman's, although longer, is nothing to it. One of the horses began to jib ere we were half-way up. Once upon the top, however, it brought us out far upon the Newcastle road, and we made fair progress until afternoon, considering the constant refusals of the chestnut beast I had to pull. We stopped at an accommodation house, which, let me say for the instruction of the uninitiated, means an inn without a liquor licence. This place was very clean and comfortable, which is more than can be said for most of these places. I now heard very bad accounts of my second man. He had taken this chestnut horse, saddle and bridle, and ridden away to the nearest township, avowedly for letters, had got drunk there, lost himself and my horse, been out in the bush a day and a half in pouring rain, struck the road back to the township almost by accident, and thus saved himself. The horse was brought in after three or four days, and was not fit for anything afterwards. He was a stable-fed Sydney horse, and a course of starving in the barren bush was not certainly a very encouraging commencement for him. This is but a common bush experience, however, and I do not wish to make anything more of it. Every one who travels with a 'party' has suffered in the same way. Next day we made a wearily long journey of it to our camping-ground; through a flat coast country full of holes and swamps, the horses stopping every minute or two, and the whole thing being sadly tedious.

But the camp, when we got there, was very picturesque. It was on a rising slope commanding the Pacific Ocean; the tents were pitched at a height

of perhaps two hundred feet above the sea, which was half a mile distant. Unfortunately, the mosquitoes were in great force. The trees were harbours for 'tics,' which consequently annoyed us and half-killed the horses. Snakes were plentiful; we killed two in one day, each over eight feet long. A coal mine had lately been commenced upon the ground adjoining ours, and a small store established, so that we were in clover as to feeding, and could get sugar, pickles, and all sorts of luxuries foreign to camping-out.

Bennett, the steady man, was not above temptation either, it seemed; for when my work was about over, I sent him twenty miles into Newcastle with the horses to get them shod for the home journey. He started at 5 A.M. one morning, in order to be back early at night. He was not back either that night or the next. On the third day I sent my tramp after him. He did his duty well: walked into Newcastle; traced the man and horses—the horses to a paddock, where they had been for two days; and, in following up Bennett, found that he had been beforehand with him, had got the horses, and started back. So he traced them along the road until well out of the town, when he struck into a near footway and arrived at camp before the horses, which did not come that night. In the morning Bennett strolled in with them. He told me some cock-and-bull story, but when he found out what I had done, even to communicating with the police, he confessed to the old sin, drunkenness. I was obliged to take him back to Sydney, so merely told him that he had forfeited all wages. He acquiesced readily, thankfully indeed, and

we accomplished the home journey together, getting lost once and camping-out on the road. At Wiseman's they were wonderfully civil. We had not a moment to wait for the punt; dinner was served to the minute; and no word, as I have said, was spoken about the boat.

At Windsor, as previously arranged, I met my wife and child, and we took two or three days on the mountain, at the Kunajong—Bennett, horses, trap, and all. Bennett behaved extremely well, and quite gained the affection of the child. When I say that that time was two years and a half ago, and that child is five years and nine months old *now*, he being then only three years and three months, and that he remembers Bennett yet vividly, intermediate things being forgotten, it will show the force of his feeling for him. Then we returned home, and Bennett begged me to lend him ten shillings to take him back to his Newcastle friends. I did so; he expressed his gratitude, and said he would be sure to return it out of the very first money he earned. We parted.

'But,' said I, 'before you go, just take this saddle and bridle across to Knight's.' He said, 'Certainly.' It was not thirty yards away—out of the back door and across the street, in fact; but the saddle never reached the stable. He must have shown great presence of mind in deciding so quickly. The other man's great-coat—a good one—was missing ever after. Another New South Wales experience!

But surely these returns and these bush experiences

are becoming monotonous. I have said enough. My occupation of the last half-year is over. If my readers are glad, I, at least, am sorry.

One last allusion to my fellow-passenger by the good ship *Watergus*. Do me the favour to remember my friend William Yeoman of that time. He was here but yesterday—rounder of face, balder of hair, more good-humoured and 'jolly' than ever. He has a prosperous way of throwing himself back and laughing out, which he had not once. I read to him the sea chapter. His picture is the last in it. As I read on, he paid me the high compliment of fixed attention, then the tears came freshly into his eyes.

'By George, I remember it all! It is all before me' (spreading out his hands) 'like yesterday. In the worry of business life I haven't thought of it, maybe once a year, but now I see it all again.'

'Ah! but *you* are to come yet.'

'Read away; good or bad, let me hear it all. You have hit off the others like life to me; I'm not afraid, let me hear it all.'

Then, when the reading was over, 'You have flattered me, sir, you have told the others right; but, by George' (which, I suppose, is a favourite expression), 'if that book is printed, let it cost—but I don't care what it costs—I must have the first copy that comes to Sydney. Why, you've brought back old times, sir!'

THE END.

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Government of Maharashtra
on 18 July, 2018